

2008 Eckhart Tolle Retreat Journey Into Yourself Part 1

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 0:05)

Lesson one, what is your relationship with the present moment?

[Speaker 1] (0:11 - 1:19:38)

Welcome, wherever you are, it'll be here. And now, no matter where or what time it is, despite all the technology at this event, I'd like to point out that this is not a performance in any way, and the good news is I didn't have to undergo makeup procedures that are usually associated with television. Don't be distracted by the technology.

It's good for once to see technology to be put to good use rather than having it in the service of human madness, which happens more frequently. But this is a very simple event, not a big thing. There's a person talking and there's a person listening.

This retreat is not going to feed your mind with information. It's not about learning new things, extending your knowledge. It's not about how to create this and that for yourself in the future.

There's nothing wrong with that. But the focus of this retreat does not lie in the horizontal dimension. So it's neither about your future nor is it about your past.

It's not examining all the things that went on in your past that are now part of your conditioning. It's not looking at the future. It's not to do with the horizontal dimension of your life situation, which is past and future.

My past, my future is my life situation. Everybody here has a life situation. And in most cases, a problematic life situation.

And some of you may believe that it is uniquely yours. The fact that your life situation is uniquely problematic. But that's not the case.

I'm sorry to say. And if your life situation, I'm not talking about your life or this moment. I'm talking about your life situation.

If your life situation is not problematic right now, just wait a little. Because you may have hit the brief interlude between problematic events that sometimes occurs. And then the next thing happens.

So it's in the nature of one's life situation to be problematic and to some extent to be unresolved, to present certain dilemmas. They look like your very own personal dilemmas. But if you look underneath the surface appearance of the apparent personal dilemmas, you find they have a great deal in common with other people's dilemmas.

Only the surface is a little different. Now you can go to many workshops and there's nothing wrong with them. They're wonderful.

They are to do with how to solve your personal dilemmas, how to create a better future, how to achieve this or that. And that's fine. This is not what we are here for, however.

It's not dealing with a horizontal dimension of your life, but something that most people overlook almost continuously. And that is the vertical dimension. One could say the dimension of depths, inner depths.

Instead of going out that way, we are going in more deeply into the vertical, which is inseparable from what we call the now, this moment, all there ever is. The now that is usually overlooked because your attention is almost completely absorbed by the horizontal dimension, which is your life situation, your personal dilemma, your problems, and all the things of this world that demand your continuous attention. This matters, matters.

And you can feel the pull of the world as soon as you step out of the protected space of this retreat center, you feel the pull of the world pulling you this way and that way and saying, give me your attention, this really is important. And of course, it may well be relatively important, relatively important, but is it absolutely important? But even within the space, the protected space of this retreat center, the world does not leave you alone because it also exists in your head.

As the continuous stream of thinking, of thought processes, and of emotions associated with those thought processes, and that is the world that is carried in your head, that doesn't leave you alone even in the protected space of the retreat center. So you could be sitting here and your attention being absorbed completely by your thought processes, suddenly you're gone. Only the body is still here.

And you will be thinking probably about your life situation. Maybe something that you will have to deal with when you get home. Maybe something that you didn't deal with when you left, before you left.

And now you're thinking about it and saying, I really shouldn't have come here, he's not talking about anything important anyway. So that, and then the thoughts have a certain momentum. Each thought is an energy form that has a temporary lifespan and not as long a lifespan as this stone or crystal, but it is a life form, a short-lived life form, not material, not physical, but it is an energetic form.

So every thought has this momentum, it comes in. And that draws your attention in. Someone could say the thoughts absorb your conscious attention almost totally.

And so you go into the thought and then you get lost in the thought. Another way of putting it is you identify with the thought. You are the thought.

And that is a dreadful fate of humanity. They have become their thoughts. They are so identified with thinking, they know themselves only as their thought processes.

And whatever their thought processes are that go through their head, involuntary, most of them, involuntary thought processes, that's who they think they are. Their thoughts are telling you who you are, that's who you think you are. And a lot of the thoughts are telling you what you've learned from other people, what they taught you, who you are.

And that gets absorbed, gets assimilated in childhood, and then it goes on from there. Or your reaction against what other people told you who they are, which is another form of conditioning. So you have all that conditioned mind movement inside you, and that is the world.

A more primordial, on a more fundamental level, that's the world inside you that tells you, give me all your attention. This matters, absolutely. And the emotions that are created by the thoughts and in turn energize thoughts and create more thoughts.

Fear, anger, many things, continuous, it's a vicious circle. Thought, emotion, because the body believes that whatever thought you have in your head is reality. Whereas most thoughts actually are not reality at all.

They're what might happen, could have happened, will happen unless this, that happens. Should have happened long ago. And even that, if you completely believe in every thought, which means I'd be identified with every thought, and you think this should have happened long ago, doesn't feel good.

It didn't happen. This is called a retreat. The prefix re- means back.

Treat, I don't know, maybe it's something to do with. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. The important thing is that it's some kind of drawing back, a treading back or whatever.

It may be a stepping back, a retreat. You retreat, one could say there's the expression you retreat from the world for a few days. You retreat from the external world, your life situation, but only from the external aspects of your life situation.

The question is whether as you are here, you can retreat from the inner life situation, the thought movement. Can you take a step back from your thoughts, your movement of thoughts, instead of believing in each thought? Instead of being totally drawn into each thought, and then every thought proliferates and becomes a stream of associated thoughts.

Choo, choo, choo, choo, choo, choo, choo. And then that comes to an end, and then the next one comes up. And you didn't catch the tiny gap in between the two thoughts, because the mind says that's not important, there's nothing happening there.

That's not, that doesn't solve my problems, the gap between thoughts, says the mind. And yet in the gap, lies the deepening. There's the vertical dimension.

So we are here to allow something to arise inside you, that in many of you is already happening. In some of you it's happening without you really having recognized that it's happening, the arising of something different from the continuous stream of thinking. In many of you it's happening, and you know it, and then you get drawn back into thought, and then it's there again.

In others, and you may only, some of you may only recognize as you sit here during this time, that yes, it has already happened, it's already happening to me, I hadn't recognized it. And in others, this may be an opportunity for it to emerge for the first time. Of course, I haven't defined yet what exactly that is, nor do I need to do that right now, and never mistake a definition for it.

So I've, there are people who it's happening, and they know it, it has already, it's emerging, it's a process of emergence, or it's happening and they don't know it yet, as beginning to recognize it, or it could happen here for the first time, or we have a fourth category of people, it just isn't happening. And if you survive these three days here, when it just isn't happening, then I congratulate you, because it will be very hard to sit through this for three days. What is he talking about?

I could hear one mind asking that question. The arising of a new dimension of consciousness. And when I say that, even that's not quite right, but we have to use words.

A new dimension of consciousness arising in and through you, human beings. Perhaps just in time to save humanity or the planet, perhaps just in time before what has become a form of collective insanity, the beginnings go back thousands and thousands of years, even the Buddha saw the collective insanity already, and said that was 2,600 years ago. And he said, you're in misery all the time.

Why? Why are you so miserable? And even your happiness is miserable, because it lasts such a short time, and then you're unhappy again.

The very thing that makes you happy today makes you unhappy tomorrow. That's why you're miserable all the time. This is my new translation of the Buddhist sutras.

And in recent times, that human mind, that what one could call dysfunction in the human mind, yes, the human mind has created great things too, but whenever it has created something truly magnificent, it's never been just the human mind. It's been the human mind connected to a deeper realm. And then the human mind became an instrument through which it was not where the creativity, the creation came from.

That came from the vertical, the dimension of depths in the artists or whatever they

created. Every creative utterance comes from there. Anything creative comes from the depths that is there within you.

The greater intelligence that is concealed in that dimension of depths in you, that is underneath the continuously, the incessant stream of thinking. People don't know what treasure there is hiding underneath that. And the more you, the better you are at thinking, the harder it gets to step beyond thinking.

So it's very hard for a university professor who has continuously used his or her mind and polished it and added more and more to it to step out of that. And they come, what's, okay, define this. What do you mean by that?

It's all just, the mind is trying to grasp something that has nothing to do with thinking. It is deeper. It can then inform thought.

It can flow into thought also. And then thought is a beautiful thing. But when you're not connected to the dimension of the vertical in yourself, thought becomes very quickly barren and dysfunctional because an entire identity arises in you.

Identity means your sense of who you are, your sense of self. An entire identity arises that is based on thought movement, who you are, continuously telling this inner monologue or dialogue that goes on. So you're talking to yourself.

Oh, you're so good. You're not good enough. You should be.

Why don't you? Others are so much better. I love myself.

I hate myself. I don't like myself. I love myself.

I can't stand myself anymore. And yet yourself is the stream of thinking, which you're really saying, I cannot stand my stream of thinking anymore. But you confused it with who you are, which is underneath that, the dimension of depth.

Yes. So that we are here to allow that to emerge that dimension of consciousness, which we could call the unconditioned because the whole stream of thinking is conditioned by the past. And the entire sense of who you are, of identity, of me that is associated with thinking is conditioned by the past.

It's a conditioned entity, conditioned by your environment. If you had been born in Iraq, the structure of your thoughts would be very similar. The content would be different.

It would be working along the same structures. So the content, I believe in this, and I believe in that. The structure is that you identify with a belief.

I am a such and such. You say religion, profession, status in society, nationality, male, female. I am a few words, put them together, a little bundle.

That's who I am. I'm an ex such and such. I'm a so-and-so survivor.

You have survived something, which is wonderful because humans go through dreadful things and they survive. But then make it into an identity or the main, the focal point of your sense of self, you're going into, identifying with a mental image, which is thought. That's who I am.

Some people have grievances, which are thoughts, associated thoughts and emotions going together. They carry grievances towards one particular person, may not even be alive anymore, my ex this or that, or a group of people, or another nation, or another religion, or some other church within your religion, or some other people, some other color or race, or ideology, grievances. And for some, that is the focal point of their sense of self, their grievance against.

So when communism was still alive, well, in some places it still is, in Russia, people got indoctrinated with certain thoughts. And many people, not all, believed those thoughts. And so they believed in, this is who we are.

So their sense of I am a communist, the collective identity was an important part of a person's sense of identity. And then communism collapsed. And I read it that in East Germany, when communism collapsed, they didn't have enough psychiatrists.

There was enormous mental confusion in people, and also suicides. And the psychiatrists, they would have needed a hundred times more psychiatrists than they had to deal with all the people who were totally confused. What all the things that we thought we were is suddenly not true anymore, what is going on?

And the fear that comes with that, I don't know who I am anymore. And that is a dysfunction to derive your identity from a few thoughts, because that's ultimately what it is. A few thoughts that you identify with, and that is the me.

And then that fragile edifice, you try to, because you're deep down, everybody knows that it feels so insecure, this little me based on thought. That's called the ego, by the way. And so the ego looks out for more to add to the insufficient sense of self, because every sense of self that is mind-based is insufficient, even if it looks confident on the surface.

Deep down, there's a sense of not insufficient means not enough, or not enough yet to be myself. I do not have enough yet, have not achieved enough yet, don't know enough yet, have not experienced enough yet to be fully and completely myself. And so with that comes the deep need embedded in every human being that has not stepped beyond, the deep need for more to fulfill me on whatever level.

Some people seek it here, others seek it there. You may seek it on the level of possessions, you may seek it on the level of achievement, on the level of relationships,

how many boyfriends or girlfriends or experiences. And people come here perhaps also looking for more to add to me, the sense of self, the mind-based sense of self, which is so hungry.

Overeating is only a physical expression of the need for more, that is basically a psychological need. So this means you eat more than the body needs to fill the deep seated longing for more. And then you can have it, you consume entertainment.

We have whole industries catering to the psychological need for more that fills your mind up continuously with more things going on, events, useless information, continuous chatter, switch on the radio and it goes in an excited voice. What's he saying? Nothing really, he's just filling you up with more thoughts, insignificant.

And so people cannot stand not getting more. Not getting more results in very quick sense of frustration, of boredom, of even fear, which is what you may experience occasionally here because the need for more is not really met in this situation. We are here to discover that to be fully yourself, to feel a sense of rootedness, deep rootedness in life, in being that the world of nature still has because nature does not have dilemmas or problematic life situations.

It may suffer, but it's not a problem. It's not a dilemma. And when an animal suffers, it suffers.

A cat just rests until it gets better, stays very quiet, no complaining. Some animals that live closely with humans become complainers also. They learn that from the human mind, which loves complaining.

But many animals remain sane despite that. And so you can learn from them. You can see how deeply rooted they are in life.

There's a fundamental deep trust in life that humans, most of them don't have anymore. They don't feel truly rooted within themselves, rooted in being, a deep sense of aliveness and peace. The purring of the cat.

The cat is in touch with something very beautiful when it purrs, a sense of delight in being alive, bliss. And humans can have that also. And I'm not talking about a superficial feeling of, oh, isn't that great?

I'm not even talking about being happy all the time. Everything's soft. There are no problems.

And it's not pretending. It's not saying, oh, no, no, it's deeper than that. The possibility of living from a deeper place than the stream of thinking.

And from there comes whatever you need on the level, the external level, even in your

future, comes out of that. If you are connected with that, that in a, any word that we use is a limitation, of course, of it. That's why in India, just to get some approximation of what this is, they use three words and string them together as if it were one to describe the state of connectedness with being.

The three words are sat, chit, ananda. Sat means being. Being, the delight of being.

The delight of life, which nature has. But when we look at nature, we don't see, we always see the struggle for survival. Yes, that also exists on the level of form, but there's also the delight in life that everything in nature, every animal and every plant still has.

And I have observed birds, other animals, and I see how they delight in doing, they're not continuously fighting or looking for food. Yes, also, they're also looking for food. There are many times when they're simply delighted.

When the eagle soars from where I live, I sometimes observe eagles high overhead, their wings stretched out, they hardly ever move. They use the air so skillfully that they don't need to make any effort. They can be for 20 minutes without ever moving their wings and just go.

And they are not looking for food. I looked at them. They're not looking for anything.

They're in a state of delight, just watching. Consciousness, the one consciousness expressing itself through this form and delighting in the life of form that it observes, that it is part of. Sat being, the delight of being alive, which is more than that.

This is only one perspective on it. Cit, consciousness. Consciousness, ah, to know yourself not as thought, which is a form that consciousness takes, to know yourself as that which underlies all thought out of which every thought and every emotion comes, that which allows the thought and the emotion to be there, which is consciousness itself before it becomes something, before it becomes a thought or an emotion or a body or a sense of me or a flower or an animal or the earth, the sun or the galaxy, before it is born into form, the moment prior to what scientists call the big bang, which is the birth of form, the universe, before the birth of form, scientists are puzzled. They cannot work out, okay, it all started with a big bang.

Now, but what was there before that? If there was nothing, where did it all come from? If you start thinking about it, you will soon go mad.

How did the whole universe come out of nothing if there was nothing, out of complete empty space? Now, that realm, the strange thing is that which was there before the big bang out of which the entire universe arose was never lost and still dwells in each form as the innermost essence of that form. And the Buddhists call that emptiness.

Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. And that is in you also. Ah, that is the dimension

that is unconditioned, timeless, no past, no future, eternal, which does not mean goes on and on.

It means no time, not endless time. Eternal does not mean endless time. It means no time, not subject to time.

Consciousness itself. And all that humans know, most humans, all they know is the objects that arise in their consciousness, which is the world of form, the world of birth and death. They know the objects, sense objects, mental objects that arise continuously.

And most humans are identified only with that, that they know nothing else. So they know only the world of form, the conditioned, time-bound, past, future. On a personal level, all they know is their life situation and the continuous dream of thinking.

That's what a life. Now, if we want to use theistic language, we could say you're totally concerned with the world and you don't know God. God not as an entity, controlling entity somewhere in space, no, but that the unmanifested life out of which the entire world of manifestation arises, the unmanifested that contains everything in a state of oneness.

So your life is totally incomplete, no matter what you achieve on the level of form. And everybody who has achieved great things on the level of the world knows that after a little while, you feel elated for a little while when you suddenly become a VIP and see your picture in magazines or whatever it is. And then after a little while, it feels, hmm, the same old things come creeping back.

Not enough fear, I might lose it. What do they think? My reputation, the stock market, what's going to happen to me?

And deep down, they know that all their achievements are going to leave them unless they leave them first. It's either the question of, I leave the stock market, which means I die before it all collapses or it collapses while I'm still alive. In either case, it's all going to leave.

Oh my God. And the famous actor or actress knows that deep down that my appearance isn't going to last and eventually they won't want to see me anymore. So whatever you achieve on the level of form cannot satisfy for long.

The not enough remains. The sense of insufficiency remains. So you forgot something.

You forgot an entire half of life, one could almost say. You've got the manifested half. This is only a temporary way of putting it.

Don't get attached to it. There's the manifested half and you entirely neglected the unmanifested. You paid all your attention to the world, but nothing to God.

And don't get attached to that, please. Another way of putting it, you could say, if in this room, you see all the objects in this room the people, the ceiling, the lights, and so on, and the objects absorb your attention, this and that, oh, look at that, and that, and that, and that, and then the walls and the ceiling. And you don't realize that the essence of this room is actually not the walls and the ceiling and whatever is in the room, but the space itself.

Without the space, it would be useless. We couldn't, there wouldn't be enough space to sit here. So when people describe the room, they would usually just describe the appearance of the ceiling, the walls, and so on, perhaps give you the measurements, forget to mention the space completely because they were not aware of it, that the very essence they didn't mention.

This room is worthless if you just put together the objects in the room. And so in each human being, there's the equivalent of that. There are the objects that make up your consciousness, all the thought movements and the emotions, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum, chum.

They're born and they die, they're born and they die. And so in most cases, that is what absorbs your attention completely. And don't realize that underneath the continuous movement of thought, there is a spaciousness.

A sense of stillness, another pointer. Stillness, spaciousness, aliveness, delight, ananda, bliss, delight, being, consciousness, bliss, satchit, ananda, is living in connectedness with that. More than that, knowing yourself as that, not as something that arises in you and takes form.

You are the infinite space. The entry point into that is always the present moment. The point of entry into that dimension in yourself is this moment.

Now to be in this moment, truly, you need to allow this moment to be. And that's, for most humans, an unusual thing to do because most people live in such a way and you have to be aware of it if it happens in you. They live in such a way as if, and I'm going to, what I'm saying now, you can immediately recognize as a form of insanity.

They live in such a way as if the present moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome. And a large, most parts of their lives is they are trying to overcome the obstacle of this moment, which means they need to get to the next one where they believe this obstacle will have disappeared. The next moment, which of course never arrives because your entire life can only ever be this moment, which then remains a continuous obstacle that you need to get beyond, but never get beyond.

If that's not insanity, what is? But it's normal. So we don't need to be good at mathematics, which I'm not, to then find the equation, normal equals insane.

Maybe a little bit extreme, but ultimately true. If normal were not insane, human history would be very different from the way it is. If normal were not insane, what you would hear on the news would be different from what you hear every day on the news.

Well, so the present moment then is not an obstacle? Is the present moment is not my enemy? Another way of putting it.

I don't want this. This shouldn't be happening. I don't want to be here.

I don't want to have to deal with this. Why isn't it, why are we still waiting here? When is it going to happen?

What's the next thing you have to do? Have you done that? Why haven't you done that?

Come to the next thing and the next thing. Go into families, see how they talk to their children. The next, they're almost breathless because they're always running after the next thing.

And they're telling their children to do the same thing. Okay, now deal with, have you done that? Come on, do it.

And then if they get totally exhausted, they sit on this, in the sofa and then switch on the screen. And what they watch on the screen is the people going through that same behavior. But for a moment it feels good because it sends you into a kind of semi-trance-like state because they have their problems and they're not mine.

But nobody questions whether to live like that is sane or not, very rarely. Occasionally these days the truth comes through here and there, even through the media, occasionally in certain films, occasionally even on television, occasionally. But mostly it's a reflection of the collective dysfunction of the human mind.

So this moment, this is the theme of our retreat. Throughout the retreat and the times when you're not here are as important as the times when you're here. And that's the only way of putting it because no matter whether you sit here, whether you're walking from here to your room or whether you're sitting in your room or in the dining hall or amongst the beautiful trees, the trails, the lake, it's always now.

I can guarantee and predict that no matter where you find yourself here, it will be this moment. Now, our retreat here is to find out, to be attentive, to be alert in order to know what your relationship is, so to speak, with the present moment while you're here in the moment. What is your relationship to this moment?

Are you embracing it, whatever form it takes? The forms change. A new person appears in front of you.

The mouth opens, speaking happens. Then the person goes, then steps happen. A tree is

there, the beautiful colors.

Shoo, and the next thing comes. What is your relationship to this moment? Particularly, see if you can detect any way in which you avoid this moment, where you are ahead of the moment to some future moment.

That could be when you're walking between here and your room, that mentally you're already in your room doing what you're going to do there. And you don't see while you walk this beautiful moment, the incredible beauty around you, you don't see it at that moment because you're already doing in your room what you're going to do there. Or even worse, you're thinking about what you will have to do when you get home, back to your life situation.

And the dilemma or the problems, hmm, where's the now? Uh, what now? No, I need to get home to deal with all that stuff.

What am I still doing here? Ah, and then you wake up at that moment and you discover your relationship to the present moment it was one of denial. Well, you don't exist, you're not important at all.

Something else is more important, it's some future moment. And that's what I need to think about. The future, of course, is only a mind form.

The only place where you can ever encounter the future is in your head. Ha ha. Ha ha.

Ha ha. Ha ha. This is such a revolutionary thought, such a revolutionary realization.

And not even the greatest scientists or philosopher could argue with that. The only place where you ever encounter the future is in your head. Well, yeah, it has to be.

Of course it's true. And this, of course, also applies to the past. The only place you can ever encounter the past is in your head.

And yes, also to some extent, as an emotional accumulation in your body, but even that you can only feel at this moment. But whenever you remember the past, it's only the power of now, your consciousness now, that is bringing it to life. You can only think of it now.

You cannot think of the past yesterday. Ha ha. And what you think of didn't happen in the past because nothing can happen in the past.

You can't. Now is the prerequisite for being, for life. There's no life apart from now.

There cannot be. And now, what this now is, we will go into deeper and deeper here. It's in you.

So what, there's such depth to now. And whenever we talk about now, we have to approach it through language, through language which is based on time. Every word, every sentence.

And so contradictions arise because we are using something from the world of time to describe something that is beyond time. And then even when I say we are going to go deeper into the now, it sounds a little silly. But that's an inevitable contradiction that arises.

It's only because we're using words. But to see, to truly see that there is no future apart from this moment, there is that the future that you think is so threatening or important that you need to sort out has no existence. And if you realize the primordial importance of the present moment, make that the focal point of your life when we start with this retreat.

And you may find that the quality of your life improves so dramatically when you are attentive to this moment and allow it to be. The quality of your life improves so dramatically. And quality is difficult, hard to define this.

Then a quality in everything around you that you perceive, that you do. Even when you speak out of, not out of denial of the present moment, but being fully rooted in the present moment, there's a quality to what you say because the words, which are thoughts that become words, arise from a deeper level that you are now connected with when you say yes to this moment. That's the entire spiritual practice.

See if you can be in a state of yes to this moment, no matter what form this moment takes. And because this moment takes on so many different forms, people have fallen into the delusion to think that their life consists of millions of moments, and another moment, and another moment, and that past moment, future. No, there's only one moment ever, but the form it takes changes, it continuously.

So what is your relationship to this moment? Do you deny it, do you resist it? Are you in a state of inner contraction?

Say, want to be somewhere else in place or time? Mentally, go elsewhere totally, which is denial of now. Miss it, are you missing?

You miss your entire life if you miss the aliveness of this moment. So what comes is an alertness. What I sometimes call the state of presence is a state of alert attention, relaxed alertness.

As you open yourself to the now, as you begin to live in a yes relationship to the present moment, and particularly when something comes in that before you would have rejected, denied, complained about, or run away from internally. In other words, something arises in the now that the mind says, that shouldn't be happening. The soup

is cold, it should be hot.

But at this moment, the reality is, I'm giving a very simple example. I could give the most dramatic examples of the same dysfunction. It can become the cold soup that you are complaining about internally.

I'm not saying, by the way, that the soup here is cold, but it's, you could complain internally about, these really shouldn't be, I'm paying all this money and what am I getting here? Cold soup, this is just a neutral example, I think. I'm paying all this, all I'm getting is this cold soup.

They should, I'm going to talk to someone about it, and you're eating it. But there's an enormous amount of complaining about it inside. And something in you loves that.

What is that, that loves going on about it? And if you can find somebody you can talk to, we can agree with you, you can energize each other mutually. Did you taste that soup too?

Wasn't it dreadful? Oh, you're absolutely dreadful. Now, a very different thing is saying, taking it to the kitchen and say, oh, the soup is cold, would you mind heating it up again, please?

No problem. You're not even complaining. You're simply stating a fact.

You're not going, if you go to the kitchen and say, you, you are, how dare you save me this cold soup? You are in a state of resistance to what is, because what is, is the cold soup. And you can substitute anything in your life.

And there are far worse things than cold soup. So you are in a state of resistance to the is-ness of this moment, which is the cold soup. So there is the non-dysfunctional, non-effective way of dealing with it, which is, for example, to complain internally and to someone else to get, to expect, to hope to get some feedback.

Yes, yes, you're right. Which something in you loves, and what is it that loves that? It's the mind-made egoic entity, the me, that consists of thought forms that are never enough.

And because the thought form of me is never enough, what it loves is to be right about something because it can add the position of rightness temporarily to its sense of self. I'm absolutely right about this cold soup. And I have, and now, of course, somebody has to be wrong.

And it's the kitchen staff and the whole place. And it's the people who, all the chefs of the world, whatever madness you can think, somebody has to be wrong. And so it's very, there's something satisfying in living in a state of resistance or denial of the isness of the

present moment.

That's why it is so all-pervasive in humans. There must be some payoff when they continuously resist and complain and deny the present moment. And what is the payoff?

It's unconscious, of course. When you make it conscious, you're beginning to step out of it. And this is why it's good here to look at it because it may come up in you, even as you're here, not necessarily the cold soup.

It'll be something else. There's hardly ever a situation that does not bring up certain things of that kind. So the isness of this moment, at this moment, there is nothing you can do about the cold soup because it, you cannot argue with isness.

It is cold. What do you want? It is, is.

So that is, what is your relationship then to the isness of this moment? You reject, you say, this is how it is. It's cold.

Then, of course, you have a choice. You're free. You can eat the cold soup and say, that tastes okay too.

Or you can say, it doesn't taste good, but I'm eating it anyway. Or you can take it to the kitchen and say, could you please heat up this soup? It's cold.

Without falling into the delusion that you are right and somebody else is wrong and attempting to strengthen your sense of self by making someone wrong, how dare you? You personalize the whole thing when you do that. How dare you serve me this cold soup?

Me. And so to the ego, that is very satisfying. It doesn't feel good.

The body knows that it doesn't feel good when you're in that state. The body, if you could examine the physiological things that accompany that state, you would see that it doesn't, it affects the blood circulation. It affects the heart.

It affects your breathing. It affects the entire energy field of your body, which is contracted. And now imagine humans living most of their lives in such states of denial.

What that does to the body also, just a small thing compared to what it does to their well-being. My God. So watch out for the things that would usually create a response of resistance.

And see if you can allow this moment to be whatever form it takes, whether you can recognize the is-ness as something that it would be mad to argue with. And if anything needs to be changed about the is-ness of this moment, very effective action arises out of the state of non-resistance. Far more powerful, far more effective than any action that

comes out of the state of denial or resistance of the present moment.

So it's not that you become a doormat that anybody can do anything to you and you say, oh, that's fine. It's not that. It's not that.

Very often a no may come. No, I'm not eating this soup because it is cold. No.

Powerful no. So when I say yes to this moment, which is our practice here, it's easy to mistake that for believing and then believe that you have to say yes continuously, externally. That's fine.

Can you give me \$1,000 right now? Oh, yes, of course. Because I always say yes to the present moment.

And is it okay if I buy drink and drugs with this? Yes, it's fine. Go ahead.

Anytime. Somebody stops, you're waiting for the bus. Somebody stops, you can smell the alcohol and says, you want a ride?

Do you say yes because you say always yes to the present moment? No. You say, no, thank you.

What you don't say is, how dare you offer me a ride? You're completely drunk. You might even say, get out of the car.

You're drunk. And it might work. It will be powerful.

Step out, walk home. Maybe he'll do it. Right action arises out of that.

And sometimes a very powerful no. But it doesn't mean that you resist what is. What you don't, what is, is this person is asking you for money, let's say.

And he's asking you 10 times already. You've given twice and he never gives anything back. And then the time comes, can I have another?

No, I'm not giving you any more. Oh. Internally, you're not resisting that.

You accept the fact that this man is asking for money. That's what he does. That's his conditioning.

He can't help it. That's what he does. So that's the isness of the present moment is this person wanting that from you.

And what arises then out of the state of acceptance of this isness is not some kind of inner rejection of this person even. In a wider sense, when you accept this moment, every human being that comes into the space of now is also accepted as they are, which doesn't mean that you do whatever they want you to do. But they are accepted.

And if their behavior is dysfunctional, conditioned, that's how it is. And you say no, if no arises. No.

And it's a non-reactive no. Powerful no. No.

No. And that's quite beautiful too. So out of the inner yes to what is may occasionally arise an external no to the situation, which doesn't mean you reject internally what is at all.

So you become very, very powerful. You become a power that is greater than the conditioned force that is in the human mind can act through you when you live in alignment with the isness of this moment. Inner alignment with is.

And do not argue with it. You recognize that you cannot. What is is at this moment as it is and cannot be otherwise at this moment.

It doesn't mean you cannot act, change, help. But right now that is. And that what we see as an event, we isolate it by calling it an event, something that happens.

But if you could see on a deeper level that there is no isolated event anywhere in the universe, the entire, the totality of the universe brings about this so-called event. The form that this moment takes cannot be otherwise, otherwise it wouldn't be. It's connected to everything else, all the totality.

So what is is inevitable. It doesn't mean that now you cannot act, that now you cannot help. But you have recognized, first of all, the inevitability of this.

So the action that arises, so the energy that you bring to it is one of enormous empowerment, which you were cut off from when you denied the power of this moment. You denied, when you denied this moment, you denied also the power that lies concealed in this moment. When you deny the form that this moment takes, you deny the enormous power that's concealed underneath it.

And that becomes very obvious and very, so incredible when something really dreadful happens in your life. And it may be that there's no action that you can take. Sometimes you say yes to this moment, but you know that action arises and you do something to change.

You fall into a river, it's cold, and then you get out if you can. And then they're shivering, that's how it is. You don't bring a whole level of psychological suffering onto it.

It's enough to be cold and shivering. Why do you need to suffer on top of that? It's just shivering, it's cold.

But there's nobody in the head complaining about, it's just, the moment you complain, you personalize the whole thing. You become a victim of circumstances in your own

mind. You become somebody who needs to be right as against circumstances.

And you strengthen the whole dysfunction. And what kind of action can arise out of that? Further dysfunctional action.

It's called karma. The end of karma is to live in alignment, not to react against the present moment. Respond to the needs of the now, yes.

Not react against the form that this moment takes. Because karma, the word in Sanskrit, means action, action and reaction. That becomes a wheel.

So it's pictured as a continuous wheel. You step out of this wheel of action, reaction, reaction. So what are you reacting against?

The form that this moment takes. I don't like it. There's something wrong with it.

Shouldn't be happening. With that little thing, everything, your entire life shifts when your relationship to the present moment shifts. Then the future, the so-called future, huh, looks after itself because what we call future is just an, is now, it comes out of now, the form.

Jesus tried to get that. He tried, he said, look, why are you concerned about what's going? Look at the flowers, how they live, how beautifully close they are.

Look at the birds. They're not worried. They're not anxious.

See how they live, free of problems, free of dilemma, not concerned about tomorrow. Learn how to live from nature, he said. Look at the birds and the flowers, see how they live.

You can live like that too. And your beauty will be even greater than the beauty of the flower, which is very great. There's a beauty in you that is even greater.

And that, all that emerges. And then all the things that you think you need, they will come to you. The moral, in the old translation of the New Testament, it says the moral will take care of the things for itself.

When you live in such a way, that comes first. It's, people get this wrong. They think, okay, the moral will take care of everything.

Not unless you live in alignment with now. Then your life unfolds. There is an intelligence that comes into your life through you.

And out of that, that also affects the external circumstances of your life. And it even affects your life situation, the dilemma and the problems. Not that a certain amount of change will ever disappear.

Things will come and things will leave you. Things will come into your life and things will dissolve. That must continue in the world of form.

But that can unfold much more harmoniously when you live in alignment with is. And so that's our practice here. Many of you already practicing, you try it out here.

It requires alertness. It requires you to be alert to see what your relationship is to the present moment, at this moment. So you need a certain degree of alertness is needed.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:44 - 1:19:47)

Lesson one continued on disc two.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:47 - 1:40:51)

And so that's our practice here. Many of you already practicing, you try it out here. It requires alertness.

It requires you to be alert to see what your relationship is to the present moment, at this moment. So you need a certain degree of alertness is needed. And so it also implies that your sense perceptions will become sharpened because very often you will find yourself looking and listening with greater intensity, greater clarity as you walk from here to there, as you sit, lie, stand.

And the amazing thing is when you no longer deny this the isness of now, the stream of mental noise that we call thinking that is totally conditioned by the past slows down. And you may encounter spaces of pure alert, aware presence. You may find yourself looking at a tree or a flower or the sky in a state of simple alert clarity.

And you are so aligned with this beautiful moment that there is no need to add something to it by labeling it mentally in any way or interpreting it in any way. Nothing is needed. Nothing needs to be added to the incredible aliveness, the incredible beauty that's already here.

And before you couldn't see it because you could only see it through very obscurely through some screen of that thinking screen. And then you might walk through nature and say, oh, there's a pretty flower. And the mind goes on.

Oh, look at that tree. That must be an old tree. I wonder how old it is.

And then onto the next. And this is so the cessation of the involuntary stream of thinking that most people are totally trapped in comes with the yes to what is. You don't need to say, okay, I have to stop my mind.

That usually doesn't work. Occasionally, people who are in extreme agony of suffering, occasionally that can stop your mind. But unfortunately, that's not your case.

So we have to make do with what we have here. And that is, you've suffered enough. You wouldn't be here if you hadn't.

You've suffered enough because you see what an unsatisfying place the world is when you are not connected with that which is beyond and deeper. But when you are connected, and the portal is now, when you are connected, the world isn't really that unsatisfying anymore because your expectations are considerably lower. Now, that sounds negative, but let me explain.

You no longer expect that some person or some situation or some achievement or some place or some possession should make you fulfilled and happy. You're no longer looking to the world to make you happy, to give you, to add to you, to finally make the sense of self complete. Now I'm full, I've got everything.

Just wait. Either you lose again, or you're so full that you become more and more unhappy again. It's too much.

I'm traveling all the time, first class. I'm eating thrice a day in the best restaurants. I've got all the men and women I want.

They all run after me because I'm so wealthy. I can't take anymore. It's all so unreal.

It's all so meaningless. So when you no longer expect the world to make you happy, the world means what I've just listed, possession, place, person, to fulfill you. Please make me happy.

And when you don't have that expectation anymore, when the world, which really comes down to the form that this moment takes, is allowed to be as it is right now, internally, it is allowed to be as it is. There you are. This is the form that this moment takes.

It is as it is, and it is allowed to be as it is. Then life becomes very satisfying because you don't expect your satisfaction from that form. Your satisfaction comes from the allowing of this form, which takes you to a deeper place, to a place of great spaciousness within.

Because they suddenly, when you allow this moment, there is space around this moment, inner space, one could say. And that is a space of peace and stillness around even the most seemingly unpleasant event. Oh, oh, and that is deeply satisfying.

And it doesn't depend on what happens or does not happen. Another word for this is surrender to life. It doesn't mean you become weak.

The opposite is you're very weak when you are not surrendered to life. When you are surrendered to life, life flows through you with a very intelligence that underlies the entire universe, moves through you and can express itself fully through you. You become strong in surrender, not as a little egoic entity, deeper, not by cutting yourself off, not

better than, no, not through comparison, from a deep place within.

Ah, so there is another way to live. A shift is possible, not only possible, it has become absolutely necessary for humanity to step out of the collective dysfunction of the human mind. And that's why we are here and why this teaching, so-called teaching, which isn't a teaching, really, that comes to you from the outside, it arises from within.

If it were not arising already from within you, you wouldn't be here. It's as if you were listening to the truth being spoken from within you. That's really how it is.

And you recognize the truth. It's so obvious. When you look at the dysfunction, it's so obvious.

Denying the now, making it into an obstacle, an enemy, how absurd. And going beyond, it's so obvious that you can live differently without needing, again, not falling into the error that you need to become something that you are not now. I need to become enlightened at some future point.

I will become, I need to work towards that. One day I'm going to make it. And you're falling into the same mental trap again, which is projecting a future self that is seen to be perfect.

Again, you're lost in future, mental projection. For this shift to happen, you don't need future. This is the amazing thing.

The mind will always come back in and say, okay, you need to work on this, get good at it, better at it, or it's not enough yet. All you need is allow this moment to be, whatever form it takes. And this includes inner forms, emotions that come.

What can you do? It's there. Anger, fear, it may come.

Less when you live in alignment with now, you can see how quickly those painful emotions subside, but for a while, they're still there. And they arise. That's what it is.

I can feel this vibration here. Could be called fear, perhaps. All right, that's how it is.

Not resisting, I'm allowing. It is not personal. The more you allow, the more you realize how little personal there is in what you thought was uniquely personal.

Human emotion, that's all. The human emotion. And it ceases to be problematic.

Allow. So the miraculous thing is, you don't need to become anything. Just allow what is there.

So I've sometimes, I've say that people, some people want to become a spiritual master. That's an idea in the head. Any spiritual, so-called spiritual master who has the idea in

the head that I'm a spiritual master is already lost.

Because there's a mental image of who you are. Now, I'm a so-called spiritual teacher at this moment. If I walked out of here and carried in my head the image of me, the spiritual teacher, that would become a dreadful burden.

I would be based, again, in thought. I would have to live up to some image, expectation, fear would quickly arise. What are they going to think of me tomorrow?

But not to carry an identity, not a future identity of me as a spiritual teacher, a spiritual master. What is spiritual mastery? Spiritual mastery is to live in alignment with this moment.

What do I need to become a spiritual master? Say yes to what is. That's how a spiritual master lives.

He doesn't resist, he or she doesn't resist what is. And is therefore empowered. The master doesn't demand that the form of this moment should be perfect always.

It's not in the nature of forms to be perfect always. There's an imperfection in almost any situation that you go into. And that's fine and good.

That is no longer a source of suffering when you recognize it's in the nature of form to go wrong here and there. It does nothing wrong ultimately, but to shift, to change. So the most wonderful place will have a downside to it.

Of course it will. The tropical paradise. Friends of mine went to Bali.

They hired a cabin in the most beautiful surroundings, paradise, the air like velvet, the scent of flowers. Whoa. They started cooking a meal.

And suddenly they heard strange scratching noises on the roof and on the windows and there were rats looking in. And then they learned to live with rats. They didn't realize what they had to do to keep them out.

And you come, you don't expect the forms to be continuously perfect. They are not. So here too, you are in this retreat center.

There will be certain imperfections on the level of form in your room, in your bathroom, in the dining hall. Who knows where? The most unexpected places.

Oh no. This is supposed to be my great time off. I've waited for this and now I'm here and this isn't right.

Ah, the world of form. Oh, I've forgotten it's the world of form. And then you can allow it, unless you choose to say something about it.

Can you please change this? Maybe they can, maybe they can't. But it is as it is.

So you live with the so-called imperfections of the world of form. And when you say yes, that's actually not so bad at all. You actually begin to become comfortable with that.

You recognize them again and again. Oh, here it comes again. Ah, and when something leaves you, because things tend to do, you get something and something leaves you again.

Ah, Buddhists sometimes use the word I think it's Anicca, impermanence. Oh, impermanence. Oh, okay, that's how it goes.

So that's the practice. It's so simple here. Just requires a little bit of alertness.

What's your relationship to now? Are you aligned with it? Do you bring a yes to it?

If not, you can notice that. And by noticing that you are not aligned with now, you can easily step, the very noticing is a stepping out of the non-alignment. Ah, okay.

And then you're back in now. Oh, okay. Step back.

We'll also see the inner body, of course, as many of you know, can be used as an anchor for staying present to feel the aliveness in your inner energy field. That becomes an anchor for staying rooted in now. Especially at night when involuntary thought processes come, start playing up.

Oh, oh, oh. And you just can't stop it. It's like a river.

It's like a stream. It goes, oh, oh. And it can be dreadful, dreadful.

Torture. You're not, of course, it's totally useless. You're not arriving at any conclusion.

No possible realization can come out of that. Realize all realizations come out of a moment of space, spacious stillness. Ah, that's what I have to do.

Okay. But not out of that stream. And so you can choose to put your attention, the mind doesn't like it.

The mind, which is the combined thought forms that are happening to go through your head, in your head. They want to keep your attention in there. And you say, okay, I'm going to feel my hands now.

And then you feel the aliveness that is still there, miraculously. And in your feet, there's an aliveness. And in your legs, ah.

And then you can feel the pull of your thinking. You must think about this. No, I'm in my hands.

Feel, feel, ah. Oh, legs. And suddenly, it's good.

All your attention is moved from the head into the body. And suddenly you realize you're not in hell. You're in a warm bed.

And then you realize how benign and benevolent, mostly, not always, the present moment actually is, the reality of now, compared to the hell that the human mind can create and often does create. How benevolent this moment is. And this is just one example of when you lie in bed and your head creates hell.

Thank you. I wish you a pleasant night.

[Speaker 2] (1:41:01 - 1:41:10)

This concludes lesson one. Lesson two, get into your body. Practices for inner body awareness.

[Speaker 1] (1:41:15 - 2:39:21)

If you've been to a talk or retreat before, you know that I often point out at this stage that you should check within to see if you are waiting for something to happen, waiting for the talk to start. What does that mean, waiting? It means there's a little bit of inner strain, a slight, very tiny inner stress that pulls you away from here and now.

Expressed facially, it could be like, and when you notice that, then you know something about your relationship with the present moment. You lost it. The end of a relationship.

Now, did he or she leave you or did you leave him or her? He or she doesn't leave you, you left. The waiting is so subtle and so all-pervasive as one's normal state of consciousness that most people don't even know that they are in an almost continuous state of waiting.

That's how normal it is. Once you detect it in yourself, it's a slight tension, strain, stress. Sometimes there's a little bit of irritation mixed in, a thought mixed in.

Come on, let's get on with it. We only have a couple of hours this morning, come on. But if you notice it in yourself as a mental energy field, even some emotion may go with it.

Irritation is an emotion. Thoughts go with it occasionally. The moment you notice it, something has arisen that is not part of that deeply conditioned mind pattern.

The seeing of it is not part of it. The seeing of it, and that's the seeing of any pattern in yourself, is not part of the pattern. And the seeing, the recognizing of it requires you to be present, aware at this moment, awake.

So when you see a pattern in yourself, mental, emotional, conditioned, of course. Now

the waiting is a collective pattern. Almost everybody has that.

There may be other patterns in you that you detect that are to do with your personal life. It doesn't matter what it is, could be the simplest thing. When you see a man with a beard and dark hair, you feel anxious and then you realize that maybe he looks like your father and you didn't have a good relationship with him.

Just it. Any pattern, collective or personal, when you detect it, you can, there's something more at that moment than that which you see. There is the seeing of it.

Before, the pattern absorbed your consciousness completely. You wear it. You become it.

You are the waiting, anxious, somewhat irritated person. There's no space around the irritation, around the stress of that moment. There's no space around it.

You are in it. And then suddenly you see it. And one could say it is a stepping back, perhaps the deeper meaning of retreat.

Because you're retreating not only from the world that you usually move in, you have to retreat also from the world in your head. You step back. And something arises that is not conditioned.

And that is pure, simple, pure, miraculous, consciousness, awareness, presence, whatever you want to call it. And that is the part in you that is not conditioned. Everything else is conditioned.

The seeing, that is an energy field. I'm using seeing metaphorically. That's not necessarily with your eyes.

The noticing, the seeing, you may feel it without, but there is the presence in which it is felt, which means suddenly there's space around that. And so it could be anything that you notice in yourself. It could be compulsive behavior, this or that, compulsive reaction.

Almost everything is compulsive. Well, everything is compulsive when you are not there as the witnessing presence. Your entire movement of thought is compulsive.

You can't stop, or you think you can't stop. And the mind loves to tell you that you cannot stop and make a problem out of that, which leads to further thinking. Why can't I stop my mind?

I mean, what's wrong with me? I've been doing meditation for years. I've been coming to, and I still can't do it.

There's no point in going on, is there? And then you believe in every thought. There's no point in going on.

I might as well chuck it all in. And then suddenly you step back and you watch those thoughts. So this is the arising of something new in you, new in the sense that you hadn't noticed that dimension in yourself before.

It was there all along, waiting underneath all the conditioned mind movements, but you didn't know it was there. And suddenly it arises, it kind of, at this time in the evolution of the planet and of humanity, that is pushing through from underneath all the conditioned collective stuff that people carry and identify with as themselves. Something else is pushing forward from deeper, a deeper dimension within you.

It's almost like the egg shell needing to break. Something wants to come out of there. And if the, so there comes a time when the shell, and which is really the shell of that egoic sense of self that consists of identification with thought needs to break.

There is an evolutionary impulse in the universe towards consciousness. And that has been playing itself out on the planet for millions of years. Consciousness expressing itself in ever changing forms.

Shh. And through humans, consciousness now wants to come to a flowering that hasn't happened before, never on a large scale, only to a few isolated individuals. And what humans did to them, well, either they ignored them completely, or they killed them, or they made them into gods to be worshiped.

And those were only the few individuals in whom this came through almost prematurely, but they were necessary precursors of what was to come, a deeper change. Now, I'm not telling you, of course, to wait for some change to happen on the planet. You know, there are many, many, many times in the history, groups of people have waited for the end or some drastic change.

We are not waiting. I'm just pointing out that this gathering here is already part of this transformation, this flowering of consciousness. And anybody who in a so-called future moment, which doesn't exist, listens to this, it'll be in the now.

Nobody could ever listen to this anywhere else, except in the now, is also part of that transformation of consciousness. Because as you listen, something new arises. There is more here than the words.

There is that which the words point to, which is here as an alive presence in you, an inner arising. There's more here than the words. If there were only the words, it wouldn't be that much.

So consciousness then wants to flower through the human form. Whether it fully will do that on a large scale, we don't know yet. Although it is happening here, there's also the dysfunction of the old form, which is no longer working, similar to a caterpillar that comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar.

And the closer it comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar, the more difficult it gets to continue to, suddenly the crawling doesn't work anymore. It just doesn't, it doesn't, things don't work anymore. The caterpillar existence becomes dysfunctional.

It was fine before because something new is destined to emerge out of this thing that is bound by gravity, can't even lift itself up one inch. And now the evolutionary transformation, when it happens, is not a progressive thing of getting better and better at doing something in a certain way, but a complete leap to another dimension. So in the case of the caterpillar, it doesn't mean that he gets better at crawling faster and faster.

No, that is left behind completely and something emerges that is a, one could almost, it's a different being. Suddenly something comes out of it and it has the most beautiful wings and it flies off, has almost no weight at all. It's not, it has completely transcended the gravity of the planet.

And in the case of humans, what does that mean? Humans have been immersed in thinking for thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands of years. The arising of thought was a necessary stage in the evolution.

Of course it was, it had wonderful, it's wonderful side too, to be able to think and speak, which is connected with thinking, words, form words and concepts. And yet gradually humans lost through that, became totally entangled in it and they lost their connectedness with something deeper than thought. They perhaps once had it, a deep connection with life, not life of form, the formless one life that is the essence of who you are, the one formless life.

But that connection humans had in the way that everything natural still has that, but they didn't even know it. It was so natural, they couldn't imagine anything else. They had that deep connectedness in which there's no fear of death because there's a deep knowing that there is no death, only the form dissolving.

The leaf, all the millions of billions of leaves that we see around us now are all dying. And there's such beauty in their deaths even. And they are not afraid of death.

They just die beautifully. So in humans, thought gradually captured their consciousness so that their whole sense of self became entangled in thought. And then gradually thought itself became more dysfunctional.

It created a dysfunctional world. So from the beginning of recorded history, if you read history and are alert, if you had just come here from another planet and you are reading human history for the first time, you can see that a large part of the human suffering that is history is inflicted on humans by other humans. All the wars and murder and cruelties, continuous warfare, except brief interludes because they got exhausted for a while.

And then the most dysfunctional century, the 20th, 100 million dead, killed by other humans. And this is a continuation, the 21st century. So on that level, the old continues.

The caterpillar is still trying to have its way and it's getting more and more difficult. Similarly, we could compare it to the flowering of plants, this incredible beauty that has arisen on the planet through flowers, consciousness expressing itself through this ethereal form of flowers that humans have always recognized as very special. And it's all flowers have had a significance where perhaps the first thing in humanity that was not utilitarian, that you couldn't really eat or do anything with it.

And yet they valued that beyond anything that they could do with it. Because deep down in a very, very deep, distantly they recognized, they recognized perhaps beauty there for the first time when the first human discovered beauty. But flowers came much later than plants.

There were 100 million or 200 million years of plants before the first flower ever opened. I'm told that was about 230 million years ago the first flower opened on the planet. But many millions of years before that, plants already covered the planet.

Now the plants, certain plants flowered, others chose not to flower. And perhaps it will be the same with humanity. Perhaps only part of humanity will go through this inner shift and the other part will say, no, we're okay as we are.

But it only requires part of humanity to go through this flowering for the entire energy field of the planet to be transformed. So what humans then are not doing is to continue perfecting the old way. The caterpillar trying to crawl faster and faster.

If we use this metaphor for humans, then that would mean humans develop the thinking mind more and more. This is what, of course, they've been trying to do. Let's analyze this more and more analysis, more and more getting facts and thinking.

Okay, how can we solve the problems that we've got seem to have a proliferation of problems on the planet? They seem to get more and more, I don't know. And then, okay, let's get together and think and see how we can solve this and analyze this problem, cut it into bits and pieces.

Well, this is what they do at universities. They cut the subject matters into tinier and tinier pieces. A hundred or 200 years ago, it was more satisfying still to be engaged in intellectual endeavors because you had a wide field and everybody at university had a huge amount of knowledge.

Even the scientists had great knowledge of, they could all, they knew Latin and Greek and had knowledge of classical culture and everything. And nowadays, they have knowledge of a tiny segment of their speciality. They can't afford to study anything else.

So it's not all that interesting anymore. You could study the, you can write a PhD on the leaves of the tree, the leaf of the oak tree. You can do a whole, it's this wonderful phenomenon, of course, the leaf, but to see it in isolation.

So everything, the mind cuts it up and it doesn't solve anything. Any solution that it comes up with creates more problems. Okay, now we'll invent a medicine to combat the side effects of this medicine.

And then another one to combat the side effect. So the humanity, we've really come to the end of the road as far as one particular line of growth or development is concerned. And now the shift needs to happen and is happening to something entirely different, which means thinking will become no longer primary, but secondary.

You can still think beautifully, but you're no longer trapped in thought. Something arises that is deeper than thought, and that is the butterfly. It's like something suddenly emerging that's so different from what was there before.

And some of you have already experienced that in yourself, that shift from there was once this anxious, depressed, or whatever, angry, stressful little me. Something else has come and there's been an opening and a spaciousness that wasn't there before or was there, but had been obscured continuously. That is the new.

And it's from there that you see the old in you, which of course still has its momentum. It has its momentum both on the external level, when you see the news and read the newspapers, then you can see how strong the momentum of the dysfunctional consciousness in humanity still is. And you can see it in yourself occasionally, that the old reactivity, the old reactions, or the waiting for the next thing, the denial of what is, in various ways of running away from the present moment, all these old movements also still periodically come as wave movements.

And oh, and sometimes even the seeing is lost. Even in those in whom the new is already arising, sometimes they get lost totally in the old, deeply conditioned, collective, personal mind movement. And wake up a few hours later, a few days later, you might even be lost a few weeks.

I've heard of people who got lost for a whole year, and then they couldn't stand the suffering anymore. And finally, through the suffering, they got woken up again. Oh, I tell you, it's like being in a nightmare when it gets so bad that you can't stand it anymore.

Suddenly you go, and you realize that you're in a bed, a warm bed. And this is a very significant term, waking up. And of course, it has been used for thousands of years in spiritual teachings, awaken.

Because everybody knows what awakens means on one level, because everybody wakes up every morning out of sleep. And you know what that is. So there's dream, sleep, and

dream, and then they go.

So it's used as a kind of metaphor to describe something that is similar to waking up from sleep. But of course, it's not that, because in spiritual terms, ordinary human consciousness is a kind of sleep also. To be identified completely with one's conditioned thinking and emotion, that movement, to be totally identified with that is a kind of dream, conditioned.

And so most humans are still in it, but many, many more than ever before are now waking up out of that. But to see in yourself, to verify it in yourself, that it is a kind of dream to be in that, because, and it creates a certain reality that corresponds to your conditioning. You interpret through the veil of this dream, through the old interpretations and reactions, you interpret the events and people and situations around you.

So everything, it gets incorporated into the dream world. So you see nothing then as it is, because you impose your dream on it. Human beings that come into your life, situations that you are in, you don't see it as it is.

You only see your story about it. And so, and then a moment comes when you wake up and you see the possibility of relating, of being and relating without the otherwise compulsive mental interpretations that you have. Sometimes when we speak of allowing this moment to be as it is, which is the essential spiritual practice, people think what we are talking about is allowing their interpretation of this moment.

They cannot distinguish between this moment and their, the way in which they interpret this moment, how they personalize it. So you could be sitting on a park bench and you may have heard this teaching that says, allow this moment to be as it is. And then you think, okay, I'm a former CEO of that company who lost his position due to evil people around him.

And then soon later was lost, left by his wife. His children don't like him. He's got, so this man is saying, okay, this moment, I need to, what I need to accept is that my life is in ruins.

It's come to nothing. Here I sit penniless on this bench, 30 years of hard work, nothing to show for it. It's all gone.

This is, so what I need to accept now is that my life is a complete mess and totally in ruins. That's a story. So the man is confusing a story with this moment and he is imposing a story on this moment.

That's one story. There are many other possible stories. The reality is always much more simple than the story.

The story is this bench, this energy field sitting here, sensing the aliveness in the inner

body, the trees, the birds, the clouds, the air, the sound of the leaves in the wind, the aliveness of it all, vibrant, without needing to tell yourself anything. You sense that, you see it. This moment is the simplicity of sitting here on the park bench and watching the aliveness all around.

What do you need to interpret? You accept this moment as it is and then you put your hand in your pocket and you pull out \$2. That's what I have here, \$2.

All right. You accept that, what else can you do? That's what is.

So the whole, the story of ruined and all come to nothing and I can't, we're never going to make it anymore. All that mind movement is not really part, is not part of the simplicity of now. So don't confuse when we speak of accept what is, don't confuse a story with the simplicity of what is.

What is, is just this here. Sense perceptions, feeling the inner body and most importantly, something that's usually ignored, to be aware of, it's very hard to use words here, to be aware and as I speak, there's the possibility that this is now seen, experienced by you here. As you sit here, what is the reality of this moment?

You have, you let go of the stories in your head about who you are or what your life is. That's your life situation, not your life, that's past. So what's, and it's all a story, it's the story of me in the head that you tell yourself.

I'm not talking, if it's memories are fine, but to identify with memories, then you personalize, it becomes a me, your memories become a self. What's the reality of this moment? Here, sitting here, there are sense perceptions, auditory, the humming sound and the voice, visual sense perceptions of the room, person sitting up here, other people in the room, the ceiling, the lights, sunlight coming in, flowers up here and you can feel perhaps your inner body also, the aliveness that is there in your inner energy field.

And underlying all that, even deeper, than anything that you experience or notice at this moment is the alert attention, the field of alert attention in which this seeing, this hearing, this sensing is happening. One could also call it a field of stillness. There's a field.

An alert stillness in which your sense perceptions happen. That alert stillness is always there. Otherwise, there would be nothing.

For anything to be, there needs to be consciousness in which the experience or the thought or the perception happens. So that alert underlying field is consciousness itself. And it is a revolutionary thing for a human to become aware of that, but it is also very, very subtle.

It is not something that you can grasp. The mind will try to make it into some new object

and the danger, of course, is there when we talk about it. We make it into an object of consciousness because we put it into words.

We make a thought out of it, out of something that is far beyond thought. So the mind thinks there's something here to grasp and hang onto or to achieve or to hold, but there isn't. It is all pervasive, the only real power in the universe, and at the same time, it is so subtle that most humans miss it entirely.

They don't know that dimension. They only know that which arises in consciousness. They know it, but they identify with it.

They react to it. What arises in your field of consciousness are sense perceptions, experiences, thoughts, and emotions. Sense perceptions, experiences, things happen, situations, which is also really sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

And so they are identified with the objects that arise in consciousness, completely identified, never knowing that deeper level, that is the very condition for the arising of anything comes out of that. And one could describe that as stillness. The word limits it somewhat, but it's a pointer.

So one could say there is in you the dimension of stillness, has never not been there, is not something that you need to acquire or achieve that you could achieve in the future, in time. If you're looking to the future to achieve that dimension, enlightenment, whatever you want to call it, if you look to the future to achieve that dimension, that very looking to the future prevents you from seeing that it's already the very essence of your being now. So that's, so many humans are looking to the future to look for fulfillment and or enlightenment or liberation in whatever way through a million dollars or through spiritual enlightenment, that they look to the future for that.

And the moment you move away and look to the future for it, as if it were something that you could get from someone or through some experience, you've gone away from it. Mentally, you've gone into the old conditioned mind movement, which is looking to the next thing. This is why I spoke yesterday of the vertical dimension that we are going into here.

So the dimension of stillness, let's for a moment use that pointer and let's never get attached too much to one single pointer because then you make it into some kind of belief. And the concept satisfies you for a moment. And then you could even say, I believe in stillness.

You don't believe in stillness? You're wrong. And then somebody else says, no, no, it's presence.

It's not stillness. There is in you that already the stillness underneath all the mental noise and the emotional fluctuations. There is that realm of the unconditioned pure awareness,

pure consciousness.

And that is on the one hand, you could call it, it is the non-personal dimension of you. It is where you transcend the personal sense of self. And then you might say, ah, no, I don't want to lose myself.

Ha, but what you hadn't realized is you think that yourself is the story of yourself, but that is no more than thoughts. If you look very deeply and closely into what you mean when you say, I don't want to lose myself, I can feel there's something precious here that I do not want to lose. And you think that sense of something precious that I am, I cannot imagine that I'm going to die.

The world, me dead, and the world without me can't be. So there's something one feels there's something precious and people, the fear of death comes because people believe this is going to be lost. That sense of precious, if you look closely at what that really is, you see that it is something that has become mixed up with a story that you tell yourself about who you are, about the name, the psychological form of me, all the things associated with that, the story of me, the beliefs.

And something has become mixed up with that. And that is the sense of I, a deeper sense of beingness that got mixed up with a story. And when you touch, even touch the realm of stillness in yourself, that is the deepest fulfillment that could be.

And you realize who you truly are is that, that is the essence of your sense of I, I, I am. It has nothing to do with a story. It just got confused with a story.

Sometimes people discover that whose story is destroyed by life. Life does something to you that you cannot, the story becomes totally unbearable. It's everything collapses around you.

So you cannot uphold the story anymore of me as somebody who has done this, or has done that, or has achieved that. It's all left you. Maybe the body has become ill, is collapsing.

Things around you are collapsing. There's nothing left that you can claim anything about, make any claim about possession. This or that, it's all gone.

I don't know who I am anymore. Some people experience that realization in prison when they are stripped of everything. Everything has left them.

The story has collapsed. I don't understand anything. Some people experience it when there's an unusual, a sudden great disaster in their life.

Suddenly all their explanations don't work anymore. The way they had explained, they had all figured it all out how the universe works, and my place in the universe, and what

the importance of my life, my work, what I've achieved and done. And suddenly, the whole thing, your whole career suddenly crumbles.

Maybe something crumbles around you, and with it, that. And in the last moments of this physical form, suddenly all that leaves you. Your story collapses at the same time as the world around you collapses.

You might be on a sinking ship or building collapsing. And at that moment, there is a corresponding inner collapse of the mental edifice of the story of me. And what is left when that collapses is that was always there.

You touch the stillness, and you touch the deepest sense of being of I am. That has nothing to do with your physical form or your psychological form of me. Nothing to do with form.

And there's a moment of peace and stillness. And many people who have touched death and survived miraculously, many tell the story of suddenly encountering a realm of great serenity and peace. All fear leaves them.

Ah, and then they come back, and many of them have never feared death again, because they have already faced death. And so death is when the structures crumble, not only around you, but the inner structures. One way is through disaster, and another way is through, the more gentle way is through sitting here.

And you've chosen that one. Other people choose the disaster, and that works very well too. And even if there was only a moment before death comes and that is realized, that is the flowering.

Your life has flowered. Consciousness has flowered through this form and realized itself through this form. For the first time, well, not the very first, but on this planet, it's still very rare phenomenon for this to happen.

Consciousness, one could say, no, this is only a little, almost a parable, that consciousness itself is dreaming the dream of form and enjoying the dream. The entire universe is, look at the planet of the billions of life forms. Any form that, whatever you could imagine, exists or has existed at some point as a life form.

Look at the oceans, how many incredible life forms live in the oceans alone. Every form that, and the wildest imagination could come up with, it'll be somewhere in the ocean. The most, wow, this comes out of somebody's dream.

Maybe they're on acid. So am I saying that the universe is on acid? Well, something like that.

Because there is obviously some wild creation going on. Some incredible dream of most

gigantic proportions. And that's only in one ocean, on one planet.

And then on land, millions of insects, different forms of different plants. And then on the level that you cannot see, the microorganisms, oh, it's just unbelievable. And that's only one tiny planet of trillions, trillions, the vastness of the universe.

And everywhere there is the game of form. What a gigantic dream. But built into that dream, because what is in each human is a microcosmic version of the entire universe.

So the awakening of humans is also the awakening of the universe, because you cannot separate the human from the entire universe. They need each other. They are totally one.

There would not even be a universe without the perceiving consciousness. The one consciousness that comes through humans creates the universe as perceived by humans. Other forms perceive a different universe.

It's all the same, and yet it's different. The one consciousness dreaming innumerable dreams. Impossible to understand.

But what we see when we look at humans, they are immersed in a kind of dream also, when you're totally in, totally identified with your reactions, and you play out the drama of your life in relationships, at work, and you go, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. It's, and you get, and you get elated. Oh, it's great, I made it, oh, it's.

And a few months later, you go down, you lost it again. Oh, it's, it's an, it's a stage. All the world's a stage.

Shakespeare saw that, and all men and women are merely players. And this is the stuff that dreams are made on. So humans can wake up out of their dreamlike existence that they are otherwise immersed in, where there is no sense of who they are apart from the script that they act out, the inner script.

Complete identification. And then there's the possibility of awakening, becoming aware of that which underlies the script, without which there would be no script, there would be nothing. There's a vast realm of still aware presence from where you can see the dream world without being immersed in it.

The body is still in it, but there is a seeing. You can see your own drama. You can see yourself playing out your own script.

And gradually there's a, the awakening is, ah, something arises that is not part of the play of form, but that can see the play of form. And if that can arise in you, it means it is a universal movement. So through you, the universe not only wants to experience this gigantic dream, there's something else built into the dream.

And that is the need of the universe to awaken out of the dream. It loves that even more than the dream. And that is, so what we cannot even begin to conceive of the magnitude of what looks only like some people in a room sitting, listening, speaking, that this is part of a much larger movement that's connected to even the most distant galaxy is part of something that is happening in the universe.

It is an event created by the one life that is the universe. So you think on a personal level, it's good to sit here because your life becomes lighter, free. So you feel a relief on a personal level, it's suffering, less and less suffering, clarity arising, stillness arising, a sense of connectedness, of beingness, a deeper sense of I, I.

But that is all a huge event of cosmic proportions. So the awakening is the awakening of the totality through this form. That is the purpose of your life to be that.

So you align yourself with the larger purpose. The secondary purpose is whatever you do in your life and you can bring the opening into anything that you do, almost anything, if you can't, you leave it. Some things have to be left and other things are fine.

It happens wherever you are. So this is what we temporarily call stillness in you, becoming aware that that dimension is already there. Coming to the end of identification with thinking and realizing that you are more fully yourself when you do not think, without trying not to think.

There are many here who already experienced the state of being free of thinking without even knowing it. You may be walking and looking at a tree and seeing the magnificence of that spectacle of the dying leaves and all their beauty. And you're perceiving that in and through stillness.

And perhaps a minute later you might say something to a person next to you and say, isn't that wonderful? And you may not realize that for a minute or 10 seconds or five seconds, you have looked at that and there was a deep sense of response of oneness or even with it, but no interpretation. And then you notice something strange.

Whenever you look at something for the first time, if you're very alert, you will notice that. When you glance at something for the first time, whatever it is, your head shifts, your vision, your field of vision shifts, it goes, and it is here, there's a lot of nature around here. It may be a tree, a flower, the sky, or it may be something manmade, whatever it is.

But nature...

[Speaker 2] (2:39:23 - 2:39:26)

Lesson two continued on disc three.

[Speaker 1] (2:39:26 - 3:23:21)

Here, there's a lot of nature around here. It may be a tree, a flower, the sky, or it may be something manmade, whatever it is. But nature particularly is helpful in this practice at first.

You notice the first moment of looking at something, there's always a space of no thought. It may be one second. It may be two seconds.

Now, most human beings are not aware of that. And with some human beings, the space of no thought is so brief that they can't capture it because immediately thought comes in after half a second. But there was half a second.

There's always a space before thought can come in, there is a looking, a seeing. And with you, that space will now become larger. And in many of you, it is already quite spacious.

In other words, the spaciousness around your sense perceptions. So notice that it is already there, but as you become aware of it, the spaciousness grows around your sense perceptions. So, and now comes, this is a magnificent thing.

It's a great mystery that in past ages, people had to spend 25 years in a monastery to be told this. The master would say, okay, you work with me for 20 years and then ask me again that question. But now things are speeding up.

We haven't got that much time in a good sense on the planet. But we are running out of time and that's wonderful. It's shrinking.

So when you see something, there's a sense perception. Can you be aware both of what arises in your sense perception, what you're looking at, or it may be listening? And can you be aware of the awareness, which is the stillness, in which that sense perception happens?

And that stillness, that awareness is, one could say, the space around it. So there is a spacious field and there's a sense perception. And you're not interpreting what you see for a while.

There's no need. There's a deep knowing, but there's no interpretation. There's not conceptual knowing.

Not that you've lost your ability to have concepts, but when you need them, they'll be there. Words, concepts, thoughts. But you are no longer compulsively trapped in concepts.

You are exiting, exiting a conceptualized reality. Oh, that is the awakening. You are stepping out of inhabiting a totally conceptualized universe, which is mental

conditioning.

Everything is called something, interpreted, labeled, named. And so a great freedom arises of perceiving through the unconditioned consciousness. And this is, you are here to experience that and to see that it is already, that movement is already happening in you.

That freeing yourself from compulsive conceptualization is already happening. And it is happening when you look at a tree or a flower or another human being, and it enters your field of vision. And in that moment, there's pure perception.

And no labeling it in any way. Just a field of stillness. And it may be that it's only there for a few seconds, but see if you can capture that space.

And that's not perhaps a very good way of saying it because you cannot capture stillness. See if you can be attentive and see if you can notice that. And that noticing is vital because as you notice the stillness in which your perception happens, the space or the stillness expands.

So as you perceive things, you are now inhabiting two dimensions. One is the dimension of form, which is all around you, continuously fluctuating. And they may be outer forms or they may be inner forms as emotions, thoughts.

And the other dimension is the dimension of the formless, consciousness, pure consciousness, pure awareness. The other is the dimension of the object consciousness, things. So you inhabit the dimension of the manifested without being lost in it because you also dwell in the unmanifested.

You dwell in the realm of stillness. And even if at first the spaces of stillness don't last for very long, it's good enough. Three seconds of looking at a flower with no thought is good enough.

And as you become aware of, there's not only the flower, I'm naming it now, but the awareness is not the naming. You become aware of the flower and you become aware of the field of awareness or the stillness. And this looks like a dualistic thing, but it isn't.

It only becomes dualistic when we speak about it. When I speak, when you speak about becoming aware of awareness, it looks like two things, aware of awareness, but that's only because we are using language, which has a subject and an object in a sentence. What is really happening is self-awareness.

You're becoming aware. Awareness is becoming aware of itself. So that is the dimension.

And you can, it's hard to talk about that. And in a way, the author of the Tao Te Ching is right when he says at the beginning of this book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching, if you can

Speak about it, that's not it. So it's not the words have to be seen as for what they are, just pointers.

So this is a beautiful practice here. Walk around wherever you are, sit, stand, lie, walk. Be aware of yourself as the aware presence, as the stillness in which everything is seen and heard.

And so you become like a little child. It's not for nothing that Jesus said, you must become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven. Now, what he is pointing to, and he's not saying exactly that, it's always just an approximation.

It does not mean you return to that state because there is only that quality that a little child has in whom the conceptual reality has not yet developed. And when that little child in whom the accumulation of words and concepts in the mind has not happened yet, that little child looks at the universe and you sometimes can see it when you see a one-year-old, one and a half, before language takes possession of their minds, the way they look is thoughtless awareness. And then they smile at you, there's the pure joy of being.

And you can see that that which shines through is magnificent and then gradually the veil descends because the child is programmed to ask, the mind of the child is programmed to ask, daddy, what's that? And then daddy says, that's a tree. And then the mind says, tree, tree, that's tree.

Next time the child sees a tree, that open, complete openness is no longer quite as open because then the child looks at the tree and then the mind says, oh, tree. And two years, three years later, the mind is already possessed with concepts. So when Jesus says that, it's pointing, as little children, you walk around in that state of openness, of non-labeling, the state of original innocence, which replaces the dysfunction, the collective dysfunction of the human mind that we could call original sin.

If we go beyond the habitual interpretations of sin, there's no doubt that there's a dysfunction in humanity. Look at human history. That's why they talk of original sin.

It means, sin means missing the target. If you, the original Greek word translated means missing the target. That's what sin means in the original.

And in other words, you miss the point of your whole existence. And if you miss the point of your whole existence, you suffer, and that eventually works too. It wakes you up eventually.

So it seems insignificant at first to the human mind to say you can look at something and notice whenever you first look at something that there's a moment of spacious presence before the mind comes in and calls it something. And if that can be sustained, not through effort, not through wanting, not through some kind of act of willpower, but if

that can be sustained simply by noticing that space of aware presence when it arises, and then even as a human being comes into your field of vision, walks in through the door, appears in front of you, you look, and there's a moment of non-labeling. Let's say somebody you have never met before comes and you look and there's not a single thought in your head for perhaps five seconds.

But if you notice that, that in the first moment there's just, there's a field of awareness in which the perception happens before the labeling comes in, you may find that it expands. And you could still be in the state of just looking a minute later. And you can even talk.

And every time a sentence has come to an end, you re-enter the state of spacious awareness. A word has been uttered and you're back in space. And then your words have a different quality too, because now they come out of that dimension.

They have an aliveness. They will touch the other human being. What you say has the essence of that freshness of being.

Not the old stuff that otherwise is your mind. You're telling them, a minute later after meeting a person, you tell them the old story of me. So what do you do for a living?

Well, blah, blah, blah, blah. You can talk about that also and then step back, knowing that's not who you are. So who are you?

You are the stillness. That's where your true sense of I am comes from. Of beingness.

So we are, this is the opportunity as you sit here to be in that state. You don't really need to think as you sit here. I certainly don't think as I speak.

The words are heard as they come out of the mouth. I hear them as you do. So there's nobody teaching anybody.

Do I know more than you? No, of course not. Probably less than most of you.

What I know is the realm of stillness. And that's not anybody's personal achievement because everybody has that as their essence. So what I know is your essence.

That's why it's nice to sit with me because otherwise, why would anybody come? What you enjoy most is to be with yourself, but in the true sense, not the mind made self, the deepest self. Now ultimately, you don't have to go anywhere.

This is just a temporary stage in the evolution of humanity where you have to travel somewhere to be with yourself. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. Now some of you have traveled to India and perhaps you already know you don't have to go to India.

And so Omega is a little closer. And the next stage is you don't have to go to Omega. Sorry.

Oh. Ha ha ha. You may go for the enjoyment.

I sometimes enjoy listening to spiritual teachers who may be using different words and yet the truth is there. And it's a wonderful, deep joy in hearing it in a slightly different form. When you meet a human being and don't label them, or if that is not yet possible, at least not for more than a few seconds, and then compulsive labels come into your mind, what you can do, however, is to recognize the labels that come into your mind as just that, without believing in them completely.

Because the mind is the compulsion to interpret everybody and everything. It does that to other human beings. You form judgments.

You meet them and you look at them. And the more you're identified with your mind, the quicker you are in your judgments of the other human being. You know them exactly.

On one, it might even be true occasionally. You may have seen something that's actually there, but what you have seen and thought that this person is, is some conditioning in the other person, not who that person is. Or you have incompletely imposed your own condition, perception on that person.

But you can recognize any thought you have about a human being as just a thought and a perspective, and one of many possible thoughts, and not the ultimate truth. So you recognize the relativity of your thinking, the relativity of your thinking. There's one spiritual teaching that works entirely with that.

It's a particular, Byron Katie has this teaching that whatever thought comes into your head about another person, about yourself, or about your situation, you look at the thought and you ask yourself, can I really know that this is so? Can I really know that this is true? And if you really look at the thought and you say, I can't really know that this is true, this thought that I have about this person or this situation.

So it's a stepping, a continuous letting go of identification with thought. And then gradually the thought, the compulsive thoughts arise less and less. And as the compulsive thoughts arise less and less, more space is there.

That's why we are here, for the arising of space, stillness. And in many of you, it's already happening as you sit there. But there are some, I can see or sense a few, not many, fields of restless energy here and there.

Or other skull. You may want to try feeling your hands as you sit here because you are restless, because your entire attention is still lodged in the head, in the mind. And the mind must feel either restless or anxious or totally bored sitting here.

So if you cannot get out of that, the body really is the, if you can simply begin by feeling the inner energy field in your hands and that there is, yes, there is an aliveness there. You can feel that there is a hand, not externally, but internally. If you closed your eyes and somebody asked you, is your left hand still there?

For a moment, you would have to internally, so to speak, look for it. And then you would say, you would feel something. You say, yeah, and then the question is, how do you know that it's still there?

Because it's not touching anything, you're not moving it. And then, of course, you will know, because I can feel it. I can feel its energy.

That's how I know that the left hand is still there. Not a memory that it was there when I last looked. And then your answer comes from the memory.

Yeah, it's still there, I saw it a minute ago. And again, these things to the mind seem insignificant, but they are of tremendous significance to begin to inhabit the body, which takes you out of inhabiting the mind exclusively. If you can feel your left hand or your right hand, you can also feel other parts of the body.

You have to just start somewhere that becomes the entry point into the body. I'm speaking particularly to those, to all of you, but to those who are either bored out of their minds. Well, if you were bored out of your mind, you would be okay.

But those who are still bored in their minds or are feeling restless and are thereby missing the essence of this gathering. Get into your body, get in there. Feel the legs, the feet, the hands, the arms.

So if you can feel one hand, you can feel the other hand simultaneously. You feel them both at the same time. The feeling of hand, feet.

You can feel both feet also as you feel your hands. Subtle at first. Some people feel almost like a tingling sensation.

Some people feel a warmth. And then can you feel the trunk of your body, the belly? Sometimes to feel the belly.

Belly is very helpful to be in there. Taking one deep breath or two or three deep breaths and following the breath with your attention and feel the belly or the abdomen. It's the more polite word.

Feel the abdomen rising as you breathe in, into the belly. And for a moment, there's a cessation. The belly is full and then breathe out.

So breathing a few times into the deep, take the belly breaths, which means you have to follow. It's not just a practice, an external practice. The essence here is that you follow

the breath with your attention and then you move into the belly.

So the attention leaves the head and moves into the body. So you breathe into the belly. And there you could say you're in, this is the center of the body.

Around here, solar plexus also, but belly is a beautiful center. And once you've breathed in a few times into the belly, you can actually feel the energy field of the belly here. And you rest there.

And from there radiates out energy into the rest of the body. Hara, the center, as the Japanese call it. So here, and you may notice then when you look at not only the images of the Chinese fat Buddha with a huge belly, who laughs all the time because he has no problems left.

Toothless old man with a huge belly. Whatever you say to him, come with your problems, he will laugh at you. But you may also notice that the Indian Buddhas and other Southeast Asian Buddhas, most of them have a very slight protrusion in the belly region.

So there's the belly, there's a little bit of just slight because they rest here. Their center of gravity is not in the head as it is with modern humans, Western especially, but the whole world has become Western. So the center of gravity is not in the head.

The center of gravity is in the center of your physically perceived body, but it goes beyond body. So you rest there. And so to sense that field of aliveness is beautiful.

It takes you out of the head. Your attention moves down here. You unite with the all-pervasive intelligence that is beyond the mind that inhabits your body that is only an expression of the one intelligence.

It's the intelligence that lives in your body as the life energy that regulates thousands of complicated functions, complicated from the point of view of the human mind that regulates, coordinates thousands of functions in the body simultaneously. Everything is just right. If one thing slightly maladjusted, the body would die immediately.

You would collapse. Temperature, heart rate, lungs circulation, innumerable things that you could spend the next 5,000 years analyzing how the human body works, and you still wouldn't get to the end of it. And that's only the outer body.

So there's an intelligence at work that is vast. So if you can feel your body, that is an entry point into that vastness. And the deeper you go, if you do it for yourself, you can do it with your eyes closed at first so that you become familiar with inhabiting the body and realize as you go deeper that it's not really about the body.

It's about sensing that vast spaciousness that is here, vast spaciousness. So you enter

the spaciousness through the body. And then everything comes to life.

Once your body comes to life, and then you look around and open your eyes without losing the inner sense of body, then you feel everything is more alive suddenly. It participates in that because you are not deadening it anymore with mental abstractions, concepts, labels. It has always been alive.

Couldn't see it anymore, couldn't feel it anymore, sense it anymore. So if I recommend that each one of you spend some time going into nature and being perhaps with, choose something like a tree or a flower or a patch of ground or a landscape, maybe the lake, the little lake we have here, whatever, or a rock with moss growing on the rock. There are some trails here, beautiful moss growing over ancient rocks.

And just be there, be with it. And as you look, feel the energy field of the inner body at the same time. That makes it much easier to look without mental interference, to have a space of stillness as you look.

So you're present within and without. And you look from there. Ah, the inner body becomes a root, that which roots you in the present moment, anchors you in the present moment and takes you out of mind.

And if then mind starts working again, anything, if you're doing anything creative in your life, becomes still first. Before the act of creation, there needs to be stillness. Nothing creative can come out of the accumulations of the mind.

The mind can be an instrument to give something form, but the inspiration, the creative impulse comes from a deeper level. It comes from the stillness, the presence. So go into the body and feel that.

You don't need to think anymore there. And then you look, and then at some point a thought comes or a creative movement comes. It may be dance, whatever.

It may be a word that you speak, words that come out of your mouth, words that come out of your ears, but they come out of the stillness. So getting in touch with that is simple and beautiful way of entering the realm of no thought. And then thought can operate beautifully and is not going to create problems as it usually does.

Because most of your life problems are created by thought. Life only has challenges. The only place where a challenge can come is in the now.

Apart from a challenge that comes in the now, there is no problem except in the head. The power to face challenges is always there in the now. But you cannot face problems because they have no reality.

Always use as the criterion to tell you whether your problems are real, ask what's the

problem at this moment? What can I do about it now? Nothing.

I'm lying in bed, it's four in the morning. Nothing. Then go into the body.

Okay. Ah, it feels good to be alive. And I thought I had problems.

At nine o'clock in the morning, when you enter the office, you open the door and there sits this man who you were thinking about all night, who is creating problems for you. And his mouth opens, words come out of his mouth. And you bring an alert, aware presence to it.

And you look and listen. And then words come out of your mouth. They won't be reactive anymore.

There will be a response, not an old reaction. Then the words will be true. They will be just right for that moment.

And they're not rehearsed. Or no words come. You may look at him and walk out.

Nobody can predict. Right action. Buddhism sometimes talks of right action, right speech, right this, right that.

I've forgotten the list, I can't remember things. But those things, they come out of right presence. You have to be present.

You cannot, otherwise you cannot manufacture or try to bring about right words, right speech, right actions. Okay, I'm trying very hard here to say the right thing. I'm trying hard to do the right thing.

It's not working. You can't try to do the right, because the right thing comes out of a particular state of consciousness. Spontaneity, intuition, realization comes out of stillness.

So in this shift, thinking loses its capacity to make you unhappy. Thoughts for a while still arise, but they're not that overpowering anymore. You don't, you're not totally in them anymore.

And then space arises. The ability to not think arises when there is nothing much to think about, when life would be far more joyful if we are not interpreting this moment. And if you live in alignment with this moment, a lot of the time, you're better off not interpreting this moment.

Let it be. It is, and out of that state, necessary action comes. One doesn't, if it's not necessary, it doesn't.

So the revolutionary shift, the evolutionary and revolutionary shift in humans, in human

consciousness is to enter that dimension where they, where compulsive thinking comes to an end. Compulsive thinking comes to an end, to transcend thought and realize that you are more fully yourself and more intelligent when you are not thinking. And when thought then comes in, should it be needed, it will be more effective, more powerful, more creative.

So you are here to be able to learn, to enter that realm of, this is the realm of great power, the realm of pure awareness. And it's not just the words that are pointing to it here. As you said, it arises because there is, that realm itself is here in the energy field of this gathering.

And it is very helpful even if your mind is saying, okay, I'm not really getting this. Of course, it's not really getting it. The mind cannot get the essence of it.

So the most helpful thing about this gathering is the energy field of stillness or presence that works, comes from within you, but is also here in this field. That's the essence. And that's what works most powerfully that transforms you.

The words are additional helps, additional pointers. And also to keep you entertained while you sit there in the energy field. So practice, practice again is the wrong word because it implies some kind of effort almost, but it is effortless.

Pure seeing, pure listening, become aware. Whenever you look at something at first, there is a space before thinking happens. As you become aware of the space, you may find that it expands.

What that means in relationship to other humans, we will look at if you can relate to other human beings, what it does to human relationships. I suggest just for a little while you stay here when this body has moved away. Just stay until you feel the impulse to get up.

Just stay for a little while in this energy field, in the stillness, and see that the body on this chair here is not really needed. That's enough what's there. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:23:24 - 3:23:32)

This concludes lesson two. Lesson three, using sound as a portal into stillness.

[Speaker 1] (3:23:35 - 3:58:13)

Like this, maybe you'd rather be somewhere else. If the weather weren't so wonderful, I would be happy to be here in this now, but it's so nice out there. There was a Zen master walking with his, one of his disciples out in the country, and they sat down under a tree, and the disciple didn't quite get it yet.

What Zen is, he'd only been there for six years. So the master was sitting there just

being, watching, listening, and the disciple was thinking. And then he said, master, I've been thinking, how do I enter Zen?

And the question means, how do I enter the state of consciousness that is Zen? And there was a long silence before the master said anything. And then the master raised his finger and said, can you hear the sound of that mountain stream?

And the disciple said, he at first couldn't hear anything, and then, yes, I can hear it. Suddenly he heard the distant mountain stream. And master said, enter Zen from there.

Oh, and for just a little while, the disciple was there, attentive, alert, listening. And then, a few minutes later, the face of the disciple changed again from the openness to, master, I've been thinking, now what if I had said, no, I can't hear the mountain stream. What would you have said then?

And the master raised his finger again and said, disciple, yes? Enter Zen from there. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

So it's, the mountain stream is beautiful. More beautiful and deeper is the state of consciousness. If he hadn't heard the mountain stream, it would have been the same.

He would have been in the state of alert attention and might have said, I can hear nothing. And the master says, enter Zen from there. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

So here, I take this as a little signpost, teaching story. For you also to work with sound here, because there are beautiful sounds here in this place. And to be attentive to the sounds that you hear.

Today, I will remind you again tomorrow when we may spend the day in silence, a particularly good opportunity to be attentive to the many subtle sounds that you hear here. From the crunching of gravel or little stones as you walk, to crickets, frogs, the leaves moving in the wind. And many sounds that are beautiful and subtle.

To hear them requires a certain degree of alertness. That's why Zen masters often raise their finger that symbolizes, not I'm telling you, you better believe me. No, not that.

It says, be alert, awake. So that's the state is required. So when you listen to a sound, you place it, there's a field of attention that is actually more important than the sound, no matter how beautiful the sound is.

But the sound can draw your attention out. And then you learn to not just listen, hear the sound and then immediately label it and then you're done with it, but stay a while and remain attentive to that sound. Or it might be a sequence of sounds, if it's crickets or birds, be attentive and remain there and let the sound be there.

So, and then you have what we mentioned this morning, when you, with reference to the visual, where you have the sense perception, the visual sense perception happens against the background of stillness. And now also the auditory sense perception happens also in the field of stillness or against the background of stillness. So to every sense perception, there is a background.

We could also call it the ground. In ordinary consciousness, humans are not aware of the ground, which is awareness. The background, the entire substratum, to use a term from geology.

So as you listen to the sound, which is in the foreground of your consciousness, you're also aware of the background. And the background is very hard to describe in any way, because it is not something. The sound is something.

And as it is something, it is born and eventually it dies. The background is not born and dies. It's always there, unchanging.

So you are lost in a surface world of external appearance and things when you do not know that dimension, the background dimension. That could also be called the unmanifested, but I'm using a somewhat different pointer. Some pointers can be more helpful to certain people.

So there is the background. And to see that as you sit, stand, lie, you listen, there's the sound. Do I have a bell here?

It dissolved. I wanted to demonstrate how a sound comes into being and then goes out of existence, slowly fades out. But we have something even better.

The entire bell has faded out of existence. So to be aware of that is amazing. One can also call it a field of peace that underlies your perceptions, a background peace.

And imagine having that background peace in human interactions, how that changes everything between human beings. Let's put that aside for a moment and stay with just the sounds. It's a little easier.

Humans are complicated. And you will notice that when you fall back into the dream state of being identified with the stream of thinking, all the subtle sounds around you, you don't even notice. You don't hear them.

Your attention is elsewhere. Your attention, your consciousness is being absorbed by thought continuously. There isn't much left for anything else.

There isn't also much left for creativity or anything new to come in. It's all repetitive. And so here you are making space inside you for there's no other way for something truly new to arise in your life.

Something truly that comes out of the freshness of the unmanifested, the freshness of being itself and takes on form. A thought, a word, an action, some creation perhaps, a work of art, a work of this or that, or simply a way of being with others that has a different quality than the normal way of being with others. So that's the only way something truly new can come in because no matter how your life changes on the surface, it's not a true change.

You could, if your bank account is empty now and you win \$10 million, on the external level, things will change, but that's not very much. The same set of problems that you have now or very similar one will arise again. The fear of not enough is not going to go away, perhaps for a few weeks.

And again, it might become magnified because you have a bigger scenario for you to play out your drama. And if you're rich and famous, then they can write about you and your drama. That's all.

And it looks bigger, but it's just like everybody else's. It's just when the drama is played out between the two famous actors in a mansion, it looks interesting. It's not interesting at all.

It's the same drama that happens everywhere else and there's nothing new. It's repetitive. And then they get a divorce and marry somebody else and it starts again.

So for something truly new to arise, you need to find, not create as such because it's already there. You need to find, one could say, that dimension of space. One could say you have to make space.

Yes. In one way, that's the space already wants to come through, the spatial consciousness. In another, one could say it requires your cooperation.

You have to make room. Then it's a beautiful, more harmonious emergence. If it pushes, it wants to come through and there's a heavy egoic structure, it may still come through, but it has to create havoc in your life first because the shell has to break.

And then you're struck by some disaster that breaks the shell of ego, whatever it may be. And so there are people here who have already experienced some kind of disaster in their lives, some great loss, where their life is threatened or where everything collapsed and something began to come through that otherwise there was no space there because there was all the mind objects that one had identified with as oneself covering up the vastness, the infinite possibilities, the infinite potential that is there in the unmanifested, in the background, in the space consciousness.

So these are two, these are beautiful pointers that there is in you object consciousness, which is thought, which is mental images. Anything that has form is object consciousness. For most humans, all they ever experience in their life is object

consciousness.

Their entire life experience consists of a succession of arising and subsiding objects. And they try to hang on to a bundle of mental objects that they think, that's me, mental images, names, labels, what they think of me or has been taught to think of who they are. But what are all these things?

They are thought forms that you hang on to and you put some, you wrap it with something, cling, cling wrap, whatever, that holds it together. A very fragile structure. And this, this is, that's me.

And it consists of mental objects, many of which are mental, the mental counterpart of material objects or material achievements. So there's the, there's, there's the shiny new flashy car, which in itself is, of course, is not important because it's going to rust in a few years, it'll be gone. And all it can do is take you from A to B.

It's nice, yes, we can appreciate these things. But if they become an object, then a mental form arises, which is not just car, it's my car, my is the important thing because then the thought object of car becomes invested with a sense of self. It's not just a car, I relate to it, I'm looking for myself in it.

So the mind object, the thought object car is becomes very important to me. And if somebody scratches your car or even dents it accidentally, it feels, if you identify with that as my car, it feels you are being injured personally. And anger arises because somebody is attacking you or let them say that somebody says, well, this may be a nice car, but my uncle has one that's much bigger than yours.

Can't be. And you feel diminished in your sense of self. That's how people play their ego games.

One little ego tries to diminish another little ego by claiming that my uncle has something bigger than you. I don't have it, but it's enough, it's my uncle. So there's some association because it's my, so it's an indirect thing that I can identify with.

Of course it's absurd and funny, but there's a lot of human interaction works in that way. And so you identify with what on, you may then identify with other things that are a little bit more subtle. Other people's opinion of you, which becomes also a mind, a mental image, knowledge, acquired knowledge, a certain skill that you have.

You may be extremely good at hitting a ball, and it's a great thing. If you are a master at hitting a ball one way or another, then probably in that field of activity, if you are truly a master, you're probably present, at least during that time when you're hitting that ball, when you're playing the game, when you're in the zone, you're not thinking, you're not planning, there's no decision-making, right? Action happens every moment and there's a power, and then people love to watch you.

But then what happens when you stop playing the game, you re-enter the normal state of consciousness. And then you identify with that skill, it becomes a mind object, you are better at it than anybody else. And the world is telling you that.

So that is something also, and then somebody else suddenly comes who is even better than you and they chuck you out. You're no longer captain of the team or whatever it is. Oh no, and that's very painful.

When a mind object, something you had identified with is taken away, dissolves, great loss, great pain. So most humans only know themselves as objects, object in the realm of object consciousness. Such a pity when there is so much more to human life, there's an entire realm that's always been there and humans just haven't looked at it.

They've been so seduced by the world of objects, both the external objects in their world as well as the inner objects in their mind. They've been so seduced by the world of objects, so fascinated by objects, so completely identified with the things of this world, that they forgot that there is an entirely different other dimension to their being than that, which has never gone away. The great thing is that you cannot destroy space consciousness, you can ignore it.

You cannot know that it's there underneath the accumulated object consciousness. Yes, but it is there. You cannot even in the most obsessed person, obsessed with thinking, and you see it's not a moment of continuously one next thing and the next thing, one damn thing after another.

Churchill's definition of history, one damn thing after another. But we could also define the human mind as that. It comes one thing after another.

And never aware that there is this vast realm within them that would free them from dependency on the world of things, which includes their mind, because it's objects, object consciousness. That vast realm is there and they never know it. It's like the example of like a beggar sitting, trying to get a few cents from someone who's going to give, and he's been sitting on a box filled with gold.

I gave that example at the beginning of the book. He's been sitting on this box filled with gold, but he's never looked. He's only looked out there.

Or we could say a more modern version of that. He's been sitting there and never realized that he has a bank account in Switzerland. And he, that has a hundred million dollars in it.

And he wants, now this is a somewhat deficient parable because even if somebody truly, if the beggar had a bank account in Switzerland with a million dollar in it, wouldn't really make that much difference to his life because it's so much deeper than that. But it's a parable for people who can think you've already gone beyond it. But I put it at the

beginning of the book because most people know only the realm of objects.

So a box full of gold works as a metaphor for a while, but it's not ultimately the right metaphor because it's so much greater than any entire gold in the world. And so that space consciousness is in you, has never gone away, but been ignored. The peace, the stillness.

And it, I'm presenting here apart from the fact, which is more important that as we sit here, it arises from within you, even if you didn't want it. But I'm also pointing out little entry points into it. We've already seen bringing a yes to the present moment is an entry point.

When you accept the form, form is a thing, is an object. When you accept the form that this moment takes as something that happens or an inner form, an emotion that arises, when you do not resist the form that arises and the normal state of consciousness is almost continuous denial or resistance of the form because you want another one in the next moment, a better one, a different one, a more fulfilling one, not this form of the present moment, I want a different form or if I don't have it, at least I can think about it so I don't have to look at this.

I imagine the next moment is going to be better than this one. It won't if you haven't fully acknowledged this one. So when you accept the form that this moment takes, that is the miracle, the form of this moment becomes an opening into the formless within you.

And the worse, the more challenging the form that this moment is and you accept it, the deeper it takes you into the unconditioned space consciousness or into peace. So if you were faced with a dreadful disaster in your life, it arises at this moment, everything has collapsed and you face it and see that the is-ness of this moment just is as it is, you look death in the face. You accept the form that this moment takes completely and suddenly you sense something that cannot really be described, it's a spaciousness or peace around that dreadful event.

It happens within a field of peace or space and I wouldn't use here the word happy. You're not happy when that happens nor are you unhappy. It is beyond happiness and unhappiness.

There's a serenity and a peace that come but you can experience even with little things. Surrender to a little thing, a little form that this moment takes, a little challenge and you find a little peace, oh, nice. You surrender to the cold soup that I mentioned yesterday and you find that the cold soup is giving you a little peace.

It's not the soup, it's changed your state of consciousness. It's gone, oh, okay, okay. You make room for it to happen, you allow it to happen.

You make space for it to happen. Humans don't make space for things to happen. They want to remove space from things.

So now if you make, if something is happening and you make space for it, you become the space. So, and this is the grace that is hidden underneath so-called bad events. Now bad events, I have a scale of, they start with a cold soup, very little and go on to some dreadful accident, disaster, imminent death or everybody around you died or you lost everything or somebody tells you you only have three more weeks to live.

You have the scale, something dreadful, something so-called bad happens in your life and then there's a scale. Cold soup is easy but for some, that's a challenge too. And so for some, it sets the whole pattern.

They have a cold soup and the rest of the day is spoiled. They don't make room for events. They don't allow an event to be.

They argue with reality. I saw a cartoon once. It's hard to describe but I'll attempt it.

It showed people wearing placards. It's come some kind of protest march and the placards contained only horizontal lines and the entire surroundings, the street and the houses were drawn in vertical lines. So the message is we are against it.

Whatever it is, we are against it. So if you make room for something to be, it can only be this moment because nothing can be apart from the now. You make room for something to be, it already is, so why not allow it?

Allow it to be. And this act of allowing, easy to do when you face something beautiful. I allow this beautiful tree with the magnificent colors to be.

That's easy. And then you walk one more step and suddenly you think your right foot goes right into the mud. And there comes a minor challenge.

Can you immediately say, oh, it already has happened. It is already. Not much you can do except, of course, pull your foot out and walk on.

But usually, of course, it would lead to a reaction. So some words may then come out of your mouth. And contraction happens.

And maybe there could be an immediate attempt to blame someone. This is what the ego likes to do. Something goes wrong, who can I blame, it says the ego.

They should have warned people about this. Or if you're in the States, then the favorite thing is to go to a lawyer and sue them. So, and this is a beautiful practice.

The many things that, in quotation marks, go wrong in your life are actually the greatest things. In a way, even greater than the beautiful trees, because they can take you

deeper. And so, to a large extent, the world is here for you to experience things going wrong.

And that is the challenge of the world. And if you still think otherwise, you may have lived on this planet for 50, 60, or 70 years and still expect things not to go wrong.

[Speaker 2] (3:58:18 - 3:58:21)

Lesson three continued on disc four.

[Speaker 1] (3:58:22 - 4:50:54)

And that is the challenge of the world. And if you still think otherwise, you may have lived on this planet for 50, 60, or 70 years and still expect things not to go wrong. Now, the illusion that you can have things not going wrong, you can still live in that illusion if you live in an advanced industrialized country, perhaps.

Travel to India, and you can no longer live in the illusion that things around you are solid and that you are in control. You're not. Nothing that you plan is going to work out.

Everything is going to be totally different from the way you expect it. And things will constantly challenge you, forms. And wherever you look, the world is not as solid as it seems to be here.

Wherever you go, there are old people, dying people in the street. Are they not? Where are the old and dying people here?

I don't see any. They're shut away. We mustn't look.

Just pretend that they don't exist. We put them away there. The old go here, and the dying, we put them there.

And the dead bodies never look, must never see a dead. It's very hard, unless you have a very close relative. If you ever want to see a dead body, they won't let you.

They say you're mad. But if you are in India, you see dead bodies very easily. It's normal.

And so you get a much better sense of the fragile nature of the world of things, objects, and forms, how insubstantial this world actually is. And it's only in the West that you have the illusion that the world of form is very substantial, solid, and it's going to last. It's there.

It has a solidity and permanency. It doesn't. And when sometimes a gigantic man-made form collapses, like two years ago in New York, that comes as a dreadful shock to people because it looked so solid, and it collapsed.

So the world of objects isn't as solid as it seems to be. The world of bodies isn't as

permanent and solid as it seems to be. It is very, very fragile, fleeting, insubstantial.

So if that's all you know, then you are in this fleeting, insubstantial universe, and there's nothing. And of course, there's constant fear. When you identify with that, even though they try to just, it's very, very much like the Buddha, because the story goes that he was born into great wealth, and his father did not want him to see that there is poverty, that people grow old, and that people die.

So he had already reached fairly advanced age. He was, I don't know, can't remember, 25, 30, whatever, and wasn't really aware that there's such a thing as ill, old, and dying people, because he lived in, this seems like almost like the West these days, that's shut away. And one day he saw it.

His father didn't want him to see it because it had been predicted he would either become a great king or a great spiritual teacher, and the father didn't want him to become a spiritual teacher. He wanted him to carry on the business of being a king. The family business.

And so, but the father had made the biggest mistake he could have made. He waited for so long, when finally he did go out, it was such a shock when he saw that people are lying in the streets, dying, and ill, and old, and he saw dead bodies. He said, what is this?

Does this happen? What happened to this man? He's not moving anymore.

He said, he is dead. Dead? Yes.

And that happens to everyone? And what's the point in anything? What's?

And soon later, he left everything behind. In the middle of the night, the story goes, when everybody was asleep, and this is a beautiful metaphor, everybody around him was asleep, and he walked out. If that's all there is, so his search then was for that dimension.

Is there something else to life than just that? And it lasted a few years. And he tried all the practices, tried to achieve a state of perfection.

He got very good at all the practices, and yet they didn't take him to the realization of space consciousness. And one day, he almost starved himself to death, when he said, I've had enough. This is my translation of the sutras again.

He said, enough is enough. Give me some food. And they brought him some food.

Most disciples left him. He said, oh, he's lost his way. He's eating again.

And then he ate normally, and he sat under a tree. And suddenly, something happened. All resistance collapsed.

He was no longer looking for anything to happen. There was surrender to what is, not looking for some state anymore. And there it was.

The last thing that, in this film, The Little Buddha, which has some nice things in it, although it's too much about the legendary Buddha, but there's still beautiful scenes in it. The last thing that disturbs him is when he's sitting under a tree, and he sees his reflection in a little pool of puddle of water. Self-reflection.

And he sees his face in the little puddle of water next to him, and he's fascinated by that suddenly. And suddenly, an arm comes out of this pool of water and tries to pull him down. This is, and he frees himself, and then the reflection is gone.

This is the last attempt by the ego to be there as an object in his consciousness, to see himself as someone, to remain there as an object in his consciousness, a mental object, making himself into a mental, this is normal consciousness, making himself into a mental object and then have a relationship with it. I love myself. I hate myself.

Now, do I really hate myself? I must remind myself on the bathroom mirror that I love myself. I love myself.

You have a relationship with yourself. Of course, it's better to love yourself than to hate yourself. It makes life a little easier.

But when you love yourself, there's always on the other side, the possibility that you might also hate yourself. Better to go beyond loving and hating yourself by not having a relationship with yourself at all. By simply being yourself, and you can only be yourself as space consciousness, not as an object.

So anything that goes wrong in your life, a form that appears and you allow it to be, that form becomes an opening into the formless within you. So your spiritual practice is whenever something goes wrong in your life, and luckily enough, it happens a lot. Not saying that you cannot improve your life.

You can improve your life greatly. You can create a much better reality for yourself, which is nice. You can create through applying the power of thought and action and visualization.

You can improve your life considerably. You can live in a bigger, more beautiful place, feel better about yourself and so on, but you cannot escape from the other, from arising sooner or later. Another polarity, no matter what situation you go into, and I'm not saying you shouldn't improve your life.

It's great, but do not expect it to be free of the other polarity, which will arise. Even in the mansion, something will go wrong. And that's what the gossip magazines are all about.

The gossip magazines are about things going wrong in mansions. And that makes people feel a little bit better about things going on in their little houses, but it's the same. And they love reading about famous people, things going wrong in their lives.

Oh, isn't that great? Their lives are all collapsing, just like mine. So you, one thing that usually happens that when something goes wrong, it pulls you into the old, it strengthens the reactivity of the old mind structures.

There's complaining and running away and shouting and fighting. But there's the possibility, when you recognize the little thing, big thing, going wrong, so to speak, that it isn't really wrong, you work with it. You work with it by not resisting the is-ness of what, of the suchness.

Buddha has this beautiful expression, suchness. The suchness. And you work with that rather than resisting it, allowing the suchness of what is right now, the form that this takes.

And if the form that this takes should be a limitation, may seem a limitation on your sense of freedom, your freedom of movement, a limitation on what you want to do, a limitation on where you want to get to, and suddenly something rises up in front of you. A door, a wall, you're trying to go that way and suddenly there's a closed door, metaphorically speaking, or literally speaking. Once we arrived at a place to give a talk, rented a hall, there was already a long lineup outside.

Nobody had the key. And there was nobody there, they'd all gone home. So 200 people were lining up, some were getting angry, I arrived, can't get in.

So you're actually faced with a wall. So what do you do then? Start shouting?

No, of course you take action. Can you call somebody? Maybe somebody somewhere has a key and maybe they can come.

Okay, somebody did that, but in the meantime, here we are. What was there to do except to cooperate with that moment? So I would just go say, greet everybody in the lineup and everybody was very happy.

And almost by the time I reached the last person, somebody had arrived with a key, as if it had been planned. Now, the strange thing is when you cooperate and allow something to be that initially looks like an obstacle, initially looks like something has gone wrong and both little and small, when you allow it to be, it becomes an opening into something that you cannot predict what that is. It changes its face from hostile to benign and helpful.

The very event that seemed hostile turns around on the external level very frequently, even more importantly on an inner level, the shift happens, but you cannot really

separate what happens on the outside from what happens on the inside. The inner shift happens and then the significance of that situation changes also. So that really is the true spiritual practice is to work with all the little and big things in one's life that seem to be obstacles or blockages.

Whatever arises in the now, I'm not talking about some mental formations in the dream world of thinking, actual obstacles, actual things going wrong, losing this, missing that, meeting somebody and it's the wrong time, it's the wrong place. And don't try to figure out why this has happened. It's very often, more often than not, it's impossible because you may not think there must be a deeper reason why this has gone wrong.

That's a secondary thing that if you are to know the deeper reason, you will suddenly be staring you in the face, you can't miss it. But in the meantime, you don't even need to figure out what the deeper reason is. It's enough to allow what is to be and then see what happens.

It doesn't prevent you from taking action. If you can take action, you take action. But in the meantime, the form that this moment takes is given space to be and there's the key.

Then that which had looked like an obstacle, a blockage, becomes an opening into space consciousness. So the archetypal image of that that humanity has is the cross and people misinterpret it and even Christians don't fully understand the deeper significance of the cross because the cross is the worst thing that could possibly happen. It's an archetype of suffering.

The man on the cross is humanity. The cross is the archetype of suffering. The cross is a torture instrument.

The cross means complete helplessness, complete extreme pain, but also it means surrender. Not my will, but thy will be done. Thy will is the will of the whole that has brought about the form that this moment takes.

And then surrender happens and it's strange that the torture instrument is a symbol for the divine at the same time and it turns into a symbol for the divine through the act of surrender. Somebody once said, I don't know who, but it is very wise, that which stands in the way is the way. And I said in this book, *Stillness Speaks*, that which seemed to deny the existence of any transcendental dimension to life becomes an opening into that dimension.

Because it sometimes happens that a grave, a serious illness, a dreadful disaster in your life, something going dreadfully wrong to someone close to you, it seems to deny any meaning. It destroys often people's belief. Christians sometimes come to me and said, I've lost my faith because this or that has happened to me or to my wife or to my children, my son, and I can't just, how could that happen?

I've been, they don't realize that they were still at a childish stage in their faith. They had some deal with God. They said, if I do the right things, nothing bad.

Okay, do we have a deal? I do all the right things, then nothing bad will happen. But that's not how the universe, because what they're saying is no form will ever dissolve in my life.

I will not encounter death or the accidental dissolving of some form. And so they came and it was good that they lost their faith because then they went deeper. After losing their faith, they realized that that level of faith was childish, although for a while it helped them, and then it didn't work anymore.

So they had to lose and then go deeper to something far more substantial than that and learn to, the deep lesson that is there when you totally accept any form of death in your life, because very often it is that something dissolves, something leaves you, comes to an end, and it looks bad. And then you allow it to be. Now you may not be able to allow it to be immediately.

The pain that you feel, the emotional pain may be there, and there's nothing you can do. You weep, but then you allow that to be. It does not matter where you begin to allow what is to be.

Ideally, you allow the form at this moment to be as it is totally, and so there's no rising of any pain. But that is not always possible yet for humans. So sometimes an event like the death of somebody close to you, the death of a parent, the death of a sibling, or even more hard, more difficult, the death of a child, it happens.

Forms dissolve in their own time. There's no predicting when a life form, the form will dissolve. And so pain will come.

You may weep, and you may experience that's the sadness. And there you can allow that to be so that it comes to be space around what you feel. There's a deep allowing of the sadness that you feel, and then there's space around it.

And that's how you may feel that the sadness, underneath it, you've already touched the peace underneath the sadness. It's already there. But you have to allow the sadness.

Not saying, I shouldn't be feeling sad, I should be feeling peace. I shouldn't be feeling sad, I should be allowing this moment. No, but that's not the fact of this moment.

The fact of this moment is what you feel at this moment. So the yes to what is, the primary yes is to whatever arises. The secondary yes is the yes to whatever you feel about that which arises.

In a smaller example, you're on the road, the car breaks down, a little thing goes wrong,

depending what country you're in. In some country, your life may be threatened if you get stranded by the road, or in some big city in North America too, in some parts of big cities. But so it could be a big thing or a relatively small thing.

And again, you may just, you may succeed in this not-so-big event to say, that's how it is. And then you face it completely and say, okay, what action can I take? Become still, and then action happens.

But it's possible also that you look at the engine and you go, oh, but no, this is not a game. And suddenly you become conscious of what you feel, the anger that arises. And then you go, ah.

And what can you do? You have to, it is what is. At this moment, there's anger.

And then comes the secondary allowing. You allow the inner, what is on the inner. You give that space.

Because the amazing thing is, whatever emotion is passing through your system, there's always far more space than the emotion. You just have to find it. There's a vast spaciousness in you that is greater than any emotion, that can hold any emotion and allow it to be.

It's there. So there's suddenly some space around the anger. You've stepped back from the anger into space.

There's always more space than things in space. You can verify that tonight. The sky is maybe clear tonight, still be clear.

And you look up into, you go away from the few lights that there aren't, you can see vast stars, suns, most of the stars that you see except for the few planets are suns at great distances. And you only see a tiny fraction of the infinite vastness of the universe. And when you look, you can see there are two dimensions.

There are things in space and there's space. It's so easy. There are things in space and there is space.

But that which is awe-inspiring about when you look up there is not the things in space. What is awe-inspiring is the vastness of it. Infinite, unimaginable vastness of space.

Billions, not just billions of suns, billions of worlds of galaxies. Each galaxy consists of billions of suns. Vast!

And you look, it stops your mind when you truly look. You go, unimaginable vastness. Yes, the suns and whatever else is there is beautiful to look at, but that sense of sacredness of unimaginable vastness is the space that you look into.

And this is just the external version of what is within you. Within you also, because you're only a microcosm, microcosmic version of the universe. In you also, there are things, objects in your consciousness, and there is the vastness of consciousness itself.

And the uncreated, Buddha calls it the unborn, the uncreated, the unformed. He doesn't, and this is so wise to put it like that, because by saying that, it is almost impossible to make it into a mental object, because the word itself denies itself as an object. It denies itself by saying the unborn, on the one hand, you have a word that is an object in consciousness, but the object in consciousness denies its very existence as an object.

This is why the Buddhist teaching is so profound. So he says to his monks, there is, oh monks, that's how he addresses his monks, in the translation, there is, oh monks, an unborn, uncreated, unformed, unmanifested. And then it goes on, it's a little bit stylized sutra.

If there were not an unborn, uncreated, unformed, unmanifested, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the created, the formed, and the manifested. A beautiful pointer. So, isn't it amazing that you encounter it, not by running away from the world of forms around you, not by attempting to escape the limitations that the world of forms seems to impose on you continuously, and there's this longing for freedom in every human being.

And most human beings look at their life situation as a set of limitations around them. It usually is because every form is limited. Even if you were extremely wealthy after a while, that would become a limitation on you.

You have to have walls around your big house and need bodyguards to go out. So, and then there are the limitations that the body at some point becomes a limitation on you. No matter how fit it is at this moment, eventually you'll grow old, and it may be a little more difficult to get up.

Oh, my back hurts. Or a more serious limitation, and many limitations happen because form is limitation. And there's a longing in humans for freedom from limitation, freedom.

And people believe that this freedom can be found in some situation. This is not to say that you cannot improve your life situation. It is wonderful to do that, work to improve your life situation, live in a nicer place, but not as in believing that that will free you.

It's nice because when you play with the world of form, it's nice to have beautiful forms around you if you can, but don't depend on them too much because you juggle these forms and then one drops. And then before you know it, another one drops, and then somebody throws you on more. Okay, so the escape from limitation is not the escape from the limitations of form in your life.

It's through the seeming limitations. By allowing the form of this moment, which quite

often seems to be a limitation on your life, by allowing it internally to be as it is. So one could almost say you walk through the limitation, not away from it.

You don't run away from it. You face it. And as you face it, allow it to be, it's no longer a limitation.

That's inner freedom. So you find inner freedom often in the worst of circumstances people have found it. They found it in prison camps.

They found it through serious illness. They found it through serious disability. They found it through loss of everything that they had and identified with.

And suddenly they were driven into acceptance of what is. And then the very limitation around them became an opening. And so some people in prison are living this teaching also.

I get more and more letters from people in prison who have become free in prison. And some reported, a couple, that they got released prematurely and they were not even up for parole. Suddenly it happened, but it was a secondary bonus.

The miracle is that often a difficult situation, even on the external level, changes and shows a more benign face. But that is a secondary bonus that you get as you surrender. And that it is truly miraculous what you can experience as there's a shift in that consciousness, how quickly an external situation can turn around, how quickly help can come in because you now cooperate with life, which is now, never not now.

You cooperate with this moment. There's no resistance to life, which is now. And then life can help because the entire universe is a field of intelligence.

Nothing is dead. Everything is an expression of that intelligence, that consciousness. It's in the very space in this room.

And then it gets through the human, it becomes focalized, but it's all pervasive. The human is like a magnifying glass that you hold against, there's the sunshine, and then you have, it concentrates it. But it's everywhere.

And then life becomes helpful in sometimes miraculous ways. Suddenly the right person comes, the right event comes, the right thing comes. But this is not, this is what Jesus calls the things that you need will be added unto you.

It is secondary. The inner shift is primary. What Jesus describes as finding the kingdom of heaven, which is here now, not over there, some other place, some other time, that is primary, that shift.

And then what happens in the world of things is secondary. But miraculously, more often than not, a shift in the world of things will reflect the inner shift. And if it doesn't, the

energy that you bring to it will change it.

So in other words, maybe they won't release you yet from prison, maybe you're still there, and yet you become a factor in that place that usually would be called bad, that is healing and brings enormous help and healing to all, to those around you. There are people who are not taught, who are in prison and teach this already. So they are exactly where they are meant to be.

It's amazing how either the situation changes or that which you bring to the situation changes. And so the quality feel of the situation becomes different. And so the work then is, you can now see to welcome the moment, no matter what form it takes, particularly if it looks not good on the surface.

That's where the power, your work, if you can call it work, I don't like that word, but particularly when this work becomes powerful, when applied to all those many events in your life that look not right, wrong, shouldn't have happened, it's not what I want, there you apply becoming friendly with what is. Then the limitation of what is becomes your portal into freedom from the form, your dependency on the forms, your inner dependency for your sense of who you are, your sense of wellbeing, of peace on forms, that goes. And so then you can say what Jesus said, I have overcome the world, he said.

People didn't understand what he was talking about, maybe one or two understood. How can he say I've overcome the world? He has no power at all.

Where's his army? He doesn't have, he's powerless. How he hasn't over, he was talking about the inner realm, dependency on things for his inner state.

Because all these, the teachings of humanity, the deep teachings, they do not come from a person. They are nobody's possession or achievement. They come when someone, a person, a human form, becomes transparent in their personal selfhood.

The objects become loose and let through space consciousness. There are still some objects in the mind, yes, this and that, but not self-identification with the objects. So they don't form this crust of self that blocks that which is underneath.

So there's, it can come, it comes through. You become transparent to that spaciousness. And then something comes through you into this world.

It may be through words. It may be through action. It may be through a simple, invisible emanation of your being that does something, to even to this world of things.

It changes things here too. It makes it more harmonious, a more benign place to be, a less harsh place. Yes, where polarities still exist, but in a more benign way.

In other words, you become an instrument for healing in a very wide sense of the word,

for peace. Peace comes through you into this world. And it is the peace that you cannot understand, that Jesus didn't understand either because he said the peace that passes all understanding.

So in other words, he didn't understand it either. His mind didn't understand. The way it comes from the depths of it, you become a field of peace in this world.

It's almost as if something from another dimension came through you into this world of form and affects the world of form. So this is your destiny also, to become that transparency as the crust of identification with mental objects breaks up, dissolves, something shines through. And so in many of you, you already bring, as you go out into the world, you bring peace into situations simply by being there, by not stepping out of the old reactive consciousness.

We'll be talking again what that means in relationships in more detail. So when you allow the form that this moment takes to be, your own form, the psychological form of me becomes somewhat transparent. When you resist the form that this moment takes, your own psychological form, the form of me becomes more solidified, rigid, impenetrable.

And you can actually feel that in yourself. When you go into a situation and you have contraction and resistance, you argue you need to be right. And you can see in that need to argue, to be right, to win, your own psychological sense of self contracts and becomes more hardened.

The me, you get a stronger sense of self, a stronger sense of who you are, but it's the illusion of who you are. When you can triumph over somebody and show them that you are right and not they, or that you have more than they, or you know more than they, or can do more than they, or you're more miserable than anybody else, it works either way, as long as it's more. You are ill, I've been ill for years.

Mind, I have more than you. I may not have more money than you, but I'm more ill than you. And this is the madness of the human condition.

When you resist what is, the form hardens the self. And when you allow what is, it softens. And as it softens, it becomes transparent and something shines through that is spacious.

You become spacious. And I am sure it also does something even to your physical form. Although scientists don't know, haven't discovered what that is.

Maybe they haven't examined a surrendered human being yet. Maybe they haven't heard about it yet. And as humanity begins to live in this way, or a larger part of humanity, of course, it is likely that the physical organism will also undergo changes.

Perhaps there'll be even more space than there's already. Already you consist of 99%

empty space. Scientists know that.

The atoms, the space between the atoms that make up your body is so vast that you are more than 99% empty space. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. In Zen Buddhism, they have Satori.

Satori is a sudden flash, a sudden realization. Not always lasting, but it's there. Sometimes accompanied by shouting or laughter.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. And then you have the Chinese fat Buddha who never stops laughing. Continuous Satori.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Tomorrow evening, when it comes, of course, it won't be tomorrow. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Tomorrow evening, I believe there's a film that you can go and see that is a very good film. It's called Fierce Grace about the life of Ram Dass. And his stroke and how that changed him and the meaning of adversity and pain.

It's kind of illustrates also what we have been addressing here. Also, if any questions need to be asked, there is no, by the way, not don't want to devalue questions. No question, however, is ultimately vital.

Many questions arise from the mind, but there are some questions that you feel you truly need to know the answer to, and it may not have yet come through you. If you become still enough, the answer to any question, the answer, if you need it, it'll come through you. But if there should be questions, you can write them on a little piece of paper and leave them.

There may be a basket or something like that there tomorrow after the session tomorrow. And I'll look through them and maybe a few will jump out and address them. A few will maybe questions that are very helpful to everybody and questions that are purely mental, I may not have time to answer, nor may I have the answer to them.

For example, can you describe the lives of the future Buddhas or who were the past Buddhas? Or what about the life on planet so-and-so? It's not vital to know that right now for your liberation.

So use whatever the moment presents, both the beauty that is out here and anything else that may happen. They're all openings. The beauty too is an opening.

The beauty that you see, the beauty that you listen to. Remember what we started with today? Enter Zen from there, from this moment, whatever it is, pay attention, be alert, watch.

If you resist this moment, you cannot be attentive to what is. Remember to work with

the sounds, bring awareness to the sounds around you and sense the awareness itself as yourself. So you are that awareness, you are that consciousness and the personal appearance, the appearance of you as a person is a temporary disguise of consciousness.

Hide and seek. Let's pretend that I'm a human, a person. Oh, that will be fun.

And let's play some dramas. Yes, but for the dramas, you have to forget completely who you are. Okay, then let me forget completely who I am and play the drama.

And then you get tired of the drama after a few hundred thousand years. And then after we've played, let's wake up. Thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (4:50:59 - 4:51:06)

This concludes lesson three. Lesson four, a day spent in silence. Silence.

[Speaker 1] (4:51:26 - 5:17:29)

The bells returned to the manifested realm, refreshed. The ringing of the bells traditionally is a spiritual wake up call, preceded usually by the alarm clock. That's another kind of waking up.

As we are speaking of waking up, I hope the people in Austin and Hollyhock are fully awake also. They are over there where the camera is. I'm sorry you have to get up so early, but you're here.

This is the day that we spend in silence, except for this person up here. Well, not really, although the words are there, they're still, the dimension of silence, of stillness is present, more important than the words. So if you can be attentive to both the words and more importantly, that which is between the words, which to the mind is nothing, and indeed it is no thing, and yet it's an energy field.

The wonderful thing is you cannot become attentive to that without the same field of stillness being activated within you. The very fact that you notice the silent gaps in between words or in between sentences means the very same silence, the very same stillness at that moment is in you also. Otherwise, you wouldn't even notice it.

And you may also be surprised to find that in the moment of noticing, the silent gap, you are not thinking. You may also find if the gaps become too long, you notice it at first, and then you start thinking again. That's okay.

Or you may not. But that is the most significant thing that can happen to you in this lifetime on this planet where you've taken temporary form as a so-called person. Of course, you are consciousness.

The most significant thing is this, cessation of thinking without loss of consciousness. From our normal perspective, the perspective of the normal everyday mind, the perspective of thought, it looks like there's nothing there. There's nothing there that can be grasped or understood.

And yet it's the ground of all being, the very ground of your existence. Existence is the manifested. Being, the way I use these words, is the unmanifested life that you are underneath the form, the background, we can also call it.

So to be aware here continuously of the background to all this, the field of stillness, the field of aware presence, of self-aware stillness, and also be aware of that which arises. In the stillness, words, sense perceptions, bodily sensations, but to have your roots, to be grounded in the stillness. And here, all you have to do is be aware of the gaps between the words.

Now there's something that cannot be manufactured, something that needs already to be there in you, a readiness, the ability even to be aware of the gaps. We could call that ability alertness, and that's the true meaning of waking up out of the dream of thought, of being identified with a continuous stream of thought. So most of you, or all of you, almost everyone here has this ability already.

There's enough presence in you so that you can notice, be aware of the silent spaces. And in that awareness, the awareness of the silent space, really, what is a silent space? It's the absence of something.

Where before there was a word, the word has returned, the sound has returned into nothingness. Before there was something, now there is nothing. So what is the silent space?

It's the absence of something, of the thingness of life. So when we say you are aware of the silent space, it's a strange way of putting it. It works as a pointer, but what does that really mean?

You are aware, first you're aware of a word, your attention is on the word, then the word disappears. And it is not replaced by inner words arising in you because attention remains, the word disappears. And so when we say you are now aware of the gap, what's really happening is you have become self-aware.

Awareness or consciousness has become, has recognized itself without the object is gone, just the field of bare attention remains. And that is a realm of also of great peace the silent peace that's always there in the background. And as you realize that, it seems to become stronger.

It seems to grow inside you. That's probably a perspective only, but it seems to grow and become stronger. So as you sit here, you don't grow in knowledge very much, except a

few Zen stories, but you grow in awareness.

However, any words that we use to describe it are already somewhat misleading. Perhaps a better way of putting it is to say that as you sit here, you shrink. The person shrinks.

The personal sense of self that's identified with thought diminishes and something else emerges. And so I've pointed out before, maybe not here, this is not a personal development group. Sometimes I say that when I arrive at the airport and the immigration officer says, what are you going to do here?

What do you teach? In order to reach him at all, I sometimes say personal development and know that it's not true. But if I said personal shrinkage, he wouldn't let me in.

No, the person remains, but what gradually happens is there comes a shift. The transcendent dimension in you becomes stronger than the personal. The personal can still be used, your name, the conventions that are to do with the way of interacting with others.

But more and more, something else flows into that. And we could call that stillness, but not stillness as just an absence of noise, but stillness as an alive presence. So stillness flows into your sense perceptions.

It flows into your looking. That's why you've been looking at things in nature and realize that it becomes so much more alive when you don't label or interpret it. So it flows into your looking.

So the stillness is also a tension. It's a stream. One could call it a current of awareness.

Where before there was thought, very different energy frequency, thought. When you approach anything or perceive anything through thought, very different frequency. You can see when you look at a person, whether he or she is perceiving you through thought or through stillness.

Or when a person is looking at something, you can see whether they are classifying it, interpreting it, finding some kind of personal relationship to it. People do that with trees and flowers too. Some people have the compulsion to pick flowers because they need to enter into a personal relationship with a flower.

Not realizing that they could be in a much deeper relationship if they went beyond the personal that says, I would like to have that. Or even if you don't pick it, you might think, how would that look in my garden, in my backyard? Or have some kind of comparison to it.

Put it in some kind of comparative category. It's not even necessarily to do with yourself,

but it's still, I overheard a man saying he was looking at the sun, at the sky after sunset. Or was it after sunrise?

Just that. And he said to his companion, look at that Turner sky. Turner is a British artist who lived, I believe, in the 19th century who painted beautiful paintings of light, sky, and just light.

And finally, yes, he was looking, but it also had to be compared to something. You can look more deeply if you don't classify and compare it to anything. And it is likely that Turner himself looked at the sky in the state of complete open presence with reference to nothing else, not to another word, to a word, or anything else.

And sometimes you find people who are walking in nature and it's beautiful and lush, but their mind comes in and for a moment they look and then they say to you, yeah, oh, you should go to Hawaii. It's even more lush there. And then they start telling you about Hawaii while you carry on walking.

So this current of awareness flowing through you into your sense perceptions, your seeing, your hearing, but it also flows as a kind of emanation because every human being has a certain emanation. Now, most humans have the emanation of mind and many humans, in addition, have the emanation frequently of pain body. Many humans have a very nervous emanation, tense.

Where's the next thing? They want to get to the next thing and at the same time feel threatened by the next thing that's going to come. So that's what they emanate with the whole being.

And that's the entire civilization. To a large extent, big cities have that energy field that's generated by millions of people. There are certain other countries where at first it feels, oh, there's less nervousness here.

But then you realize they're actually the energy field, although it may not be nervous, is a little sleepy. Instead of going beyond thought, they are drifting below thought. And so you tend to see lots of people sitting or lying around street corners in a state of semi-sleep.

And yes, it feels, I've become just arrived from New York. It feels great for a while. And you also sometimes find human beings who seem to be more peaceful.

And you yourself may find that in certain situations or conditions, you're not as nervous after a few drinks, after taking this or that substance. And it's great, it's a glimpse of what it means not to be thinking, that's how alive you can feel. But in many of these cases, when you've taken a few drinks, yes, you're beginning to step out of thought and you feel better.

Oh, it feels good, I must have another drink. Oh, let's have another. And before you know it, you're going towards unconsciousness and sleep.

Yes, you have stepped out of the stream of thinking, but have stepped, one could say, in evolutionary terms, you're stepping back.

[Speaker 2] (5:17:32 - 5:17:35)

Lesson four continued on disc five.

[Speaker 1] (5:17:36 - 6:25:46)

You have stepped out of the stream of thinking, but have stepped, one could say, in evolutionary terms, you're stepping back. That too can be a relief. But this is not what's happening here.

We, from the stream of thinking, we are stepping beyond. We do not go back to sleep when the mind no longer thinks. We are more alert, far more awake than when we were immersed in thinking.

So there comes that quality, that's the way we are going. Yes, we are transcending thought, not back to where we came from, but rising above thought. Now, that state of rising above thought, where you can still use thought beautifully, powerfully when it's needed, but you are no longer possessed by thought or consumed by thought.

Thought, useless thinking, burning up a lot of your life energy. Not going anywhere, just going around, just like the car is in neutral, you're pressing, pushing down the accelerator, not going anywhere, just vroom, vroom, vroom for hours and hours and hours. So stepping beyond thought into that clarity.

And alertness that is both gentle and fierce, that has two aspects seemingly contradictory. It's very gentle, that energy field of alert presence, but also has a fierceness. It needs to have a fierceness because it needs to cut through thought, that substance that, and thought is heavy, dense.

So to cut through that density of thought, coupled with the density of the emotional field that goes with the thoughts, you have the two layers, the density of thought, the density of that emotional field, pain body, and they cling together as two layers of density. And then comes presence. And in this case here, it comes from two directions.

That's why it's possible for this to happen. From within you, that dimension of presence emerges, pushes forward, but it might not have enough in the absence of extreme and agonizing suffering that cracks it open from above. From, it may not have enough power to cut through the density.

So all you feel then is an extreme restlessness, something wanting to happen and there

may be searching and something wants to be almost be born here, but it can't be born. It's not because the shell is not cracking, but here it's being also pierced from here, from this, the energy field that is here in this room that comes through this teaching, which is more than the words. So that the presence is cutting through from within you and from without.

So it's just the way they built the channel tunnel from two ways. They started in England and in France digging. And finally they met in the middle and they had cut through these layers of seemingly impenetrable rock.

So if it were not already happening from within you, it would be meaningless and it wouldn't work for you to be here. So the layer of thought that stream is being cut through. And when you leave here, there will, we trust, be enough presence in you so that it can happen without the external help, although occasionally it's still helpful to listen, to be reminded, to open a book and read just a few lines that have come out of presence.

That's helpful as long as you need it. But there is enough presence in you now so that you can use it as a sword. And I'm now talking about the active side of presence because presence is both fierce and gentle.

It has an active aspect and a passive aspect. It depends from what perspective you look on it. So when we say that allow this moment to be, in that there is an arising, there's surrender and presence go together.

Surrender to what is, is one side of presence and that looks passive, but that is not the full picture. You cannot surrender to what is, it would not work if there were not also a fierce aspect to presence, an active, very active aspect to presence. So on the one hand, it's very gentle and allowing, but it is also, it acts like a sword that cuts through accumulations collective of the collective human mind and pain body.

So there comes this attention when the Zen master raises his finger and looks at you, there's a fierce look on his face. We see it in old drawings of Zen masters. You wouldn't want to meet them in a dark street.

Eyes come bulging out of their heads. So they represent the fierce aspect of presence. Underneath it, if you look closely, if the artist who draw this drawing of the Zen master was in tune with the Zen master's inner state, if you look closely, you will find also hidden there underneath the fierceness, the gentle aspect of presence.

That's hidden. If you look into the eyes, they're both are present there. So allowing what is to be needs to come together with a sword-like aspect, almost what seems the mind would say irreconcilable, but they're not irreconcilable, perhaps only from the point of view of the mind.

So how does that work? Look, this moment, something arises. This moment takes form as an event that appears in front of you, a person or an event.

Now, allowing this moment to be as it is in whatever form it arises, this requires you to face fully what is, not opposing, facing in an open way, not facing as if you were fighting a battle against something. You face it in an open way like this, to have your arms extended like this. So this is the gentle, and yet at the same time, you look it straight in the eye, so to speak, whatever it is.

This is the gentle, the receptive, and the attention is the fierce. So you have, you welcome what is, but there's a fierce attention that flows through you onto whatever it is that's happening, not fighting anything, just it's fierce alertness. And that cuts through the old reactions that otherwise would, that are all accumulations in the reactive mind.

They can then not operate anymore. And intelligence itself, which is attention, attention is great intelligence, but very different from the accumulated so-called intelligence of the human mind. That is a limited aspect of the greater intelligence, a limited form that this greater intelligence can take, which is fine too.

It's only not fine anymore if that is all you know and all you think you are. If you are good at solving IQ tests, well, that is an aspect of the limited intelligence. And that's fine if you're good at that.

If you get your identity from that, it becomes problematic. I'm a member of, in, I think it's in England, they have Mensa, which is all the people who have very high IQs can become members of that. And some people let that flow into a conversation just casually.

Now, if I'm offending one or two people here, I'm sorry. That is beautiful. Why not?

If you can use your mind in such a way, it's a beautiful thing to do. If you, if that becomes an important part of your sense of self, then you get trapped in an illusory identity and you probably have a few more things to add to it. And that is part of identifying with the realm of content.

I don't qualify to become a member of Mensa, unfortunately. Unfortunately, the mind doesn't work in that way anymore. I think it never did.

I could never solve mathematical problems. And I always admired people who could. I can't even see where the problem is.

When I was at school, after the age of 13, I stopped going to school. I couldn't stand it anymore. But I still had, they had all these problems that you had to solve.

I couldn't even, my mind would go blank after reading the first few lines. A man has five sacks of potatoes and then he takes two away and takes half of that content out and

puts it into another sack. How much is left?

And that's okay for a problem to solve if there actually is a man. So we are conditioned to create problems for ourselves that lies in the conditioning of the mind. And so often when you think you have a problem, really your mind is creating a problem for yourself.

If it isn't happening at this moment, if there's no action you can take right now. And so comes the fierce aspect of presence. Oh, I've got so much on my mind.

So much, what is the expression? So much on my plate. And so you need to remember the sort of presence.

What's the problem at this moment? Can't find any. Yeah, but it's not this norm, but tomorrow when I get there, what's going to happen?

When this or that, when the moment comes, there's more than enough power in you to face it and to take right action when right action is called for because you will face the challenge when it's true in that state of welcoming attention and look it straight in the face. And in that moment, there is no thought. When you face a challenge truly, there is no thought.

There is just the looking. And it may be an actual looking or metaphorically speaking, you're looking at the situation, the totality of what has arisen at this moment, what needs to be solved, responded to, dealt with at this moment. And you look.

And in that looking that is fierce and gentle at the same time, there is an activation of a greater intelligence than what you have learned, whatever you may have learned. Now, what you have learned may eventually come into play also because eventually perhaps you will take action, part of which is to do with certain things that you have learned to do, or you will speak words, which is to do with using language that you learned in the past. But that will be only an instrument of the, it will be inspired use of whatever form comes into play when you deal with it.

But there's always, there's the moment of alert, aware sessions in which there's no thought and there's just the looking. And any master does that in any field, has the ability to look for a moment and then respond out of that. The greater intelligence responds out of that.

You just, in the same way that great sportsmen play their sports, no tennis player, great tennis player thinks, well, I think the ball is going to come there next, so I'll better move to the left now. Now, better, now I've got to get ready for the other side to jump to there. Now I have to two meters forward quickly.

It would be impossible through conceptual thinking in the mind, there is no thought. And if thought interferes, they're not playing well today. And they all have days when they're

not playing well.

And very great sportsmen actually enjoy tremendously the flow of energy and realize that they are not doing it. But there's the ability to just be there. So this is the non-conceptual intelligence in you, the non-conditioned, unconditioned intelligence in you that becomes activated.

And that deals with problems beautifully, true problems, or rather true challenges, because there are no problems. Problem arises when you are either imagining something happening to you now, it is not happening, you're somewhere else, it's not happening now. You're dwelling mentally on some possible situation.

Because even if you had an illness that is very problematic, you don't know the outcome. Will I survive or will I not survive? Of course, eventually nobody here survives as the form.

How much longer will I survive? Is that now some people to some people that becomes a dreadful burden to know that you have a condition that you may not survive, which of course, everybody is suffering from it in a wider sense. It's called, it's an incurable disease called mortality.

The diagnosis is fatal. It's always ends, mortality apparently always ends in death. So some people who see their lifespan, they cannot, they don't know how much future they have.

It can become an enormous problem because you think I have not fully lived my life. If you're 90 and the doctor tells you you only have two years, maybe that's not so bad. But even then some people say, oh no, I need a bit more time but if you are 30, it seems more problematic or if you're 20 and the doctor says you may not have much time left.

And then comes panic and then comes a sense of unfulfillment in some sense, I haven't even started yet. I haven't fulfilled what I've come here to do. All the things that I potentially could do, I won't be able to do them.

It's you become a huge problem suddenly is your enormous suffering arises. But in some cases it happens that the uncertainty about how much future you have or seeing that you have very little future left, future is removed from you, forces you more deeply into the present moment. So I know some people who have a so-called serious life, so-called life-threatening illness, of course, life is eternal but it threatens the form that you are.

A so-called life-threatening illness and they have become enormously present because they have no future to escape to anymore. It's just always, they live totally in the now. The future is so uncertain, there may be nothing there.

So there's no point in even projecting anything. There's just, and some have become

spiritual teachers and become transparent through this enormous current of awareness goes through them. And they smile and they occasionally waves of fear may still come even to them.

And then it passes and they're back in presence. And they realize no matter what they could have achieved in on through time, because that has its place as long as you have what looks like time, why not do things in time? Of course, you learn a skill, you learn a language, you learn to do this or that, you travel here or there, see new places, have new experiences, all these things time is good for.

Well, nothing helps you if you're always in the future, no matter what you experience. But so that is where usually you seek fulfillment of your life by adding more things that only time can give you, because more implies more time. I need to add more to me to be fully myself on the level of form that is true.

If you are 20, you haven't started living, you haven't learned anything, perhaps you're just learning to become a pianist or a great computer expert or whatever, and you suddenly get interrupted. On that level, it seems your life has come to nothing, but your life is not your life. There isn't even you and life.

There's only life of which you are a temporary expression. There's only the one consciousness of which you are a temporary expression. And if that flowers when you are 20, and the true flowering is not the achievement of this or that, sometimes a flowering happens indirectly through an achievement, which doesn't help the person either if they still identify with as a formal achievement.

But the true flowering is the arising of presence in you when you become transparent. And that can happen at any age. And it doesn't matter where you are in your life situation.

It doesn't matter whether, because there are some people here who have succeeded in the world and others who in the eyes of the world have not succeeded. There are others here who have succeeded years ago and then failed, and others who have failed miserably up to this point, and in a year from now, they'll be rich and famous. It all happens.

I was a failure in the eyes of the world 10 years ago, eight years ago. Now the world thinks I'm a success. Completely meaningless.

Completely meaningless. But it doesn't matter where you are at what life situation you're in at the present time. The ultimate purpose of your existence is for this form to manifest that which is beyond manifestation, to become an opening for the unconditioned, for the stillness, the awareness, that energy stream, that frequency, so to speak.

I believe it was Ramana Maharshi who sometimes used the expression, a current of

awareness that flows through you that is non-conceptual intelligence. And the intelligence, even that's a limitation. It's more than that.

It's love too. The first time I'm using this word here, because some words you have to be careful with, words like God, words like love, because the reality to which these words point is so far greater than the word that it's usually misleading to even say it. But now I've said it.

What flows through you, when we call it intelligence or great power that deals with any problem, any challenge, there is no problem, that arises, it's not just that. That which flows through you is also love, that energy stream, that hope that is there when that openness is there. And it doesn't matter what your life situation is or how much future you have left.

If that is there, even an hour before you die, that is the flowering of your life. There's no such thing as your life, we're just using it as an expression. It's the flowering of consciousness through this form.

It's the birth of that into this world. And then the mind comes, okay, then what happens after that? It wants to know what comes next, what comes after it has flowered.

Maybe there's a question in the basket about it. Let it flower first and then see what happens. Extreme challenges have the ability potentially to push you into the state of presence, to force you into the state of presence.

Little challenges, which are the majority of challenges, usually pull you into unconsciousness. Unless you now know that you can actually use whatever, so to speak, goes wrong in your life as your spiritual practice. Ah, great, here's another one.

And then you bring the allowing to it and the attention. And you look, you look at the cold soup, you look at the lost bell that was here. Oh, my bells, I've had them for years.

A friend of mine gave them to me and the Dalai Lama gave them to my friend. And they are gone. Somebody must have taken them.

Oh no, can't be. Can't be. And instead, you look where the bells were before.

There's now an empty space. Well, now they are back, but there was an empty, there was an empty space. Now there's something deeply significant about the empty spaces that are left behind by any kind of loss.

For example, these were the bells. You may get back to your car or where your car once was. And in the parking lot, there's only an empty space.

And here it is vital if you can stop and face that empty space without running away from it or cursing the empty space or immediately going into reactive. Just, this is very

strange. And this is one example.

The empty space can also be left by relationships. The wife, the partner, the husband. One day you get home and there's a letter which says, I'm gone.

I'm out of here. And if you can, again, you're at that moment, what the form that this moment takes, we will use that expression here. And here we come to something very significant.

The form that this moment takes sometimes is an absence of the form that was there a moment before. And because suddenly there is a no form where there was a form before, that is an enormous opening into the deeper awareness of the formless consciousness, unconditioned formless that you are. If you can not run away from it, if you can face this death, because the loss of anything is a small death.

The loss of the bells that you've had for years is a small death because the form is gone. The loss of your BMW is a death. The Rolls Royce, an even bigger death.

And of course there may be an actual death. And this is an amazing thing. The person that was here every day in this room used to sit in this chair.

That's the armchair, that's where the desk where they sat. And one day the message comes, they're gone, passed away. And then you look at the empty chair.

The person was so, it was so real. It seemed so permanent to have that personality that's sitting in that armchair, doing its thing, its work, talking, having its opinions, being there. How is it it's inconceivable that suddenly it's that that person is, where is he?

Dissolved, just dissolved like a soap bubble, gone. And so most people, this is the empty space that is left behind by death. Whenever a form dissolves in your life, it may be an actual death.

It may be the loss of something that had been important to you. If you can face that hole that is left behind by the form that is no longer there, it's a temporary hole into the dimension of the formless. Now, one could almost say, God, we're using that word again, the formless one life, the formless, timeless one consciousness that underlies all manifestation momentarily shines through whenever there is a hole in the tapestry of physical existence.

That's kind of the tapestry of forms. And in this tapestry of forms, which is gigantic, regularly or all the time, holes appear. If you were watching, let's just use the metaphor and say the entire physical universe, sense-perceived universe, imagine it as an extremely complex tapestry, woven, huge, of course, and you look at it.

And then you see continuously here and there little things suddenly disappearing and

temporary holes being there, opening up in the tapestry. And then suddenly there and there. So part of this tapestry, it's a continuously coming and going out and into form.

No form in this tapestry remains for long. And so holes open up continuously in it. And then are replaced by something else.

But if you can be aware of the holes, the openings, something shines through them that is not to do with form, but it's the essence of all form. And that is enormously peaceful. There's enormous peace and aliveness there.

And that's the grace that lies concealed in any kind of death, accidental death, seemingly premature death, any kind of death, and any kind of loss, potentially, but it does not help you if you deny it or run away from it. You say, no, I don't want to see that hole. And you cover up the hole with reactions immediately so that you don't have to face the emptiness.

So when emptiness comes in your life, that is a beautiful, potentially, a beautiful opening in which you can actually find yourself. You find yourself by not resisting that. And so you begin to welcome death when it comes because it is an inseparable part of this world of form.

And when we look at death, we judge it from the point of view of an identity, a sense of self that is identified with form. And from there, death looks horrible. It looks dreadful.

That's why nobody dares speak about it in Western culture, which is the most identified with egoic forms. Nobody dares. Maybe one of the few countries left where death is still natural is India, where it's in the street.

You can go to the bonfires where they burn the dead bodies every day. You can watch a very deep meditation. If you can be there in a state of complete openness and just watch, that's the destiny of every form is to dissolve again quickly.

And when you watch, contemplate the dissolving of forms, that which is beyond form arises in you. You are in touch then with the formless in you. That's the grace of death.

That's the grace which is not the opposite of life. It's only the opposite of birth. People think life and death, it's a question of life and death.

No, it's a question of birth and death. Life is eternal. Life cannot be destroyed.

Forms, yes. Even physicists know that no energy is destroyed ever. And in a wider sense, as you live in the present more and more, it's a continuous dying.

As the expression goes, you die to the past every moment. You let go. And this moment is always fresh.

You can, of course, you remember what you need to remember, but you let go of any personalized attachment to a memory. There's nothing wrong with memories. You need it.

You wouldn't be able to find your way back to your street, your house. Memory, of course, you need, but self-identification with memory, you don't. So as you live in presence, there's a continuous dying to this continuity of me, which is an accumulation of more and more things that I identify with, the continuity.

And that could be anything. You die to the past. When the bell is gone, it is gone.

It is, it has disappeared. It is the past. And this moment remains fresh.

Oh, it's gone. There is a freshness even in when something has dissolved. One could go so far as to say there is a, a breath of fresh air, metaphorically speaking, comes into this world of space-time, this world of physicality.

Whenever a form dissolves, ah, ah, there's a lightness, ah. And with that, you welcome death. Stillness is the death that you enter voluntarily if you're ready for it.

To relinquish your attachment to the structures of thought, to step out of the stream of thinking is death because thinking is form, primordial form. To step out of that is death. The arising of stillness is your death, the death of the little me.

Of course it is. And there are still many humans on the planet who are not ready for that. They want to stay entangled in form.

They want a continuation of the drama of form. They don't want an end to the drama. There are humans, many humans still on the planet who are not ready for the end of suffering.

Even if the possibility were presented to them, they would run away in fear. It would seem like, no, the end of suffering would seem like a kind of death, the end of my drama. I don't want that.

But there are many humans also who are ready to stop suffering, to come to the end of suffering. It's an evolutionary development. Now for this to, this shift to happen to you, there's one requirement and we can put it in simple language.

You need to be fed up with suffering. Not run away from it, not avoid it, but be fed up with it. You've had enough.

I've had enough. I've had enough. And if you are in psychological suffering and all suffering is psychological suffering, the rest may be pain, toothache, whatever it may be.

You can ask yourself at any moment when you can see that you are in suffering, is that

what I want? Is that what I'm choosing at this moment? Is that what I'm creating at this moment?

Humanity as a whole is coming to the point where the suffering is just too much. It's been going on for so long. And for most of you, it is true, you have suffered enough, but it means to be, it needs to be true for you.

That realization needs to come to you so that no situation, nothing that happens to you is converted into drama and suffering anymore. And the quickest way out of that, out of converting events, situations, interactions with people into drama and suffering is to be present moment centered, not story centered, not thought centered, not imposing interpretations and stories on the present moment, allowing the moment to be as it is. I gave a simple example of what is what the mechanism that makes up the manufacture of drama and suffering in people's lives, the mental mechanism, the mechanicalness behind it.

I gave a brief example in this little book, *Stillness Speaks*, where in one entry, one entry starts with three statements. One statement says, what a miserable day. The other statement says, he didn't have the decency to return my call.

The other statement says, she let me down. Then the text explains a little bit that these are stories that you impose on situations, events, and people in your life. And those are simple, very simple examples, but even the complicated drama basically works according to that same principle.

It's just that the stories that you impose become more complex, but this is where they start. And the stories are imposed, in many cases, one of their main reasons for being there is to enhance your egoic, mind-made sense of self, to be right. Because if you are right, if you can complain about this miserable weather, unconsciously, the mechanism behind it is you've made the weather wrong and yourself right.

You are in a superior position because you're complaining about it. What this dreadful weather's just dreadful. If you can say, he didn't have the decency to return my call, it implies, this is unconscious, that you, of course, are morally superior in every way to this person.

This is the position that you are coming from and identify with. I'm not saying you do not see that certain people do very unconscious things. You see it, but the story then personalizes it.

You find a reactive and personalized relationship to somebody's, perhaps, unconsciousness, and then use it to enhance your mind-made sense of self. It doesn't mean you don't see dysfunctional behavior for what it is, but you do not have a personalized, reactive relationship to it anymore. You allow that to be also.

There's no person there. There's only human unconsciousness. You don't enter into that personalized relationship that is story-based.

She let me down. She wasn't there. I was there.

She was not. That's the event without the story. It's raining.

That's the miserable day without the story. He didn't call. That's the event without the story.

He didn't have the decency to return my call. It's amazing how simple things, if you take away the story, the simplicity of what is without the personalized story around it, how simple life then becomes. How simple this moment always is without imposing a story on it, which is in any case only there in the service of being right, in the service of feeling superior to the situation of the person, in the service of enhancing your always deficient mind-made egoic sense of self.

This is all madness, dysfunction. If you look at, see what people, how people complicate their lives. So for nothing, for an illusory identity.

And then what is left then is things are as they are at this moment. People do what they do at this moment. Beautifully illustrated in the story that you may have heard perhaps through this mouth before, in the story of the Zen master.

Some of you probably don't know it, but it's such a beautiful story. The Zen master who had a excellent reputation as a great teacher in a town in Japan. And one day was accused by the 17 year old girl next door of being the father to her child that had just been born.

The parents asked, who is the father? They were shocked that she was giving birth to a baby. And she finally said, it was the master next door.

I went to see him nine months ago for a spiritual counseling session. And then that's when he did it to me. And so the parents got extremely angry and started telling everybody about it.

And they ran to the Zen master and with the baby and put it there on his floor and said, we know what you did. You are responsible. Now you look after the baby.

We don't want anything to do with this baby anymore. You take it. You are the father.

We know it all now. The Zen master looked and listened. And when they said, you are the father of this baby.

He said, is that so? And then they said, yes, and we are leaving this baby here. You can look after him.

Is that so? Then they left. The Zen master lost his reputation.

Nobody came to him for counseling sessions anymore. Nobody wanted to hear him anymore. All he had there was the baby.

So that was the present moment. He picked up the baby and started getting some food, sent off somebody to get some food and spend one year mostly looking after the baby that was there. A year later, the girl was a little bit more mature and cuddly confessed to her parents that the Zen master was actually not the father.

It was the son of the butcher next door was the father. So, oh my God. They ran to the Zen master and said, please forgive us.

That is all a big mistake. We've just realized that you are not the father. The Zen master looked and said, is that so?

And they said, or can we have the baby back now, please? We now want the baby. We'll look after it.

So we want the baby back. Is that so? Okay.

And off they went. This is an extreme example of the good that comes, only good when no story, even stories that other people try to impose on you is accepted. No story is taken on.

And this Zen is an extreme example of, it's a teaching story. It's an extreme example of non-reactive relationship to life and a non-story imposing relationship on life. They had their story.

They had to do, they had to make the Zen master wrong. The Zen master refused any kind of story, any kind of, he wasn't a victim of circumstances. He didn't say, I can't look after this baby.

What do I do? I can't have spent my time. No, he did what was there to do at that moment.

So the baby had the best possible start in life because for one year grew up in this energy field of great peace with the Zen master. But then the Zen master did not cling, did not have a clinging relationship to that. He was able to, in the moment, let go of the past and relinquished the baby and responded to this moment.

The parents now, he so genuinely wanted the baby back. He, she was going to marry the butcher's son. So this is an example of the simplicity.

It may be a little bit extreme. You can, you can of course say, no, I am not the father. There would be another possibility that is still not a story.

No, I'm not the father. But if that is what you believe, I cannot help it. Again, you're not buying into the story.

But if you had your own, then people, you have a story to counteract their story and so on and on this stuff out of which drama is made. So look at your life and see, are you facing situations as they are? Are you, or are you imposing and mixing up something here?

Stories on the simplicity that is always there in this moment. So that is, it's good to know that because the mind will always try to manufacture stories. And the biggest one, of course, the most intriguing story is the story of me, me and my life.

That's so interesting. And if you can't tell anybody else about me and my life, then you can tell yourself about me and much about my life. Oh, well.

The story of me, the most fascinating story. And the story of me is part of the ego, the egoic sense of self. Not saying that you do not remember what happened to you.

Of course you remember what happened to you. Not saying don't have the photo albums anymore. You still have the photo albums, but to derive your identity from a story.

And when you look at the story of me, they can see that a lot of the identity that is derived from the story of me is to do very often with making other people wrong. And see how right you have been in that situation. And how wrong those people have been to you compared or situations or God, him, her or itself.

God itself has done something to you. And so attached to the story are certain emotions. Resentments, the story is enormously energized by resentments.

And anger, sadness, they did to me, they did to me. Kinds of things. Can you look through the story and die to the story?

Not lose your memory, but die to the story as a self-reference, as giving you your sense of self. So where does your sense of self come from then if you let go of that? If you die to that and see that's not who you are and you die to the unconsciousness of manufacturing further stories.

Even complaining, let's go back to the example of the cold soup. Complaining about the cold soup is another story. The moment you complain about it, I'm not saying heat it up please, that's not complaining.

But the inner complaining or the outer verbal complaining, which implies making something or someone wrong, that's the story. So drama, unconscious people are waiting just for the next thing out of which they can manufacture drama. The egoic identity in conjunction with the pain body is just looking out for the next thing out of

which to manufacture their next dramatic episode.

Now the kind of dramas that people are drawn into vary a little. Some people have the victim drama. Somebody's always doing it to me.

Other people have other kinds of drama. They get very angry with situations and people. Others may get very sad, poor me.

Well, that's the victim. I can't remember what else, there's quite a few. And then you see how they use the tiniest events to add a little bit to incorporate into their dramatic story.

So if you can see that in others, that's already great. If you can see it in yourself, it's even greater when it happens. See it.

And so you see what that is. Some people have a greater amount of a more denser ego and a denser pain body than others. But the basic principle is there in everyone to some extent, greater or lesser.

But it ceases to operate the more you step into presence. Then there's still only remnants of that that occasionally come in. And then your life becomes simplified.

So simple. Simplify, simplify, said one famous writer. Thoreau, I think it was.

Simplify, simplify. Now people talk about simplifying their lives and they think it's to do with not indulging in excessive consumption and so on, which of course is good too. But that happens naturally.

The true simplification happens on the inner level. Let go of the stories. Pay more attention to this moment than anything else.

This is the day that we spend in silence. The day that we spend listening. Always just this moment.

It sounds like a big thing if we say we'll spend the whole day listening, watching, being alert, attentive, alert to your surroundings and alert on the inner level. The more alert you are to sense perceptions, the more alertness you will also have within. And stay for a little while with the empty chair.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (6:25:50 - 6:26:00)

This concludes lesson four. Lesson five, questions and answers. Being present amidst the world.

[Speaker 1] (6:26:10 - 7:46:18)

I've never had so many questions at a retreat. And I'm not here to flatter you. The best question, of course, is no question.

But I have never had as many good questions. So it's difficult. They all are, most of them are good questions.

Direct, alive, live questions. I've never thrown away any questions yet. I keep even the silliest question.

It might come in useful at some point. I will dip my hand in the basket in a second. One question that came three or four times.

There are a few recurring questions. Can we sit with you in silence for a while? Yes.

Yes. When you're just listening, there's stillness inside you. No commentary.

So don't miss the stillness that's actually there even when the words are spoken here. Both in you and in the speaker. There's no thinking in between sentences or words.

So whenever a word has been uttered, the stillness is there again. Who is speaking? Not this person or this little mind.

Stillness is speaking. It's not personal, not my stillness or your stillness. And as I said before, this person is listening the same as you to the words.

This person doesn't know what word is going to be spoken next as little as you know what word is going to be spoken next. It's not prepared. I said to trust in life enough for this to happen.

To trust in life means to trust in this moment, the power of this moment. That whatever this moment requires will be there. There were also two or three questions by people to whom the stillness is yet only a mental concept.

And so they ask, it's great to hear about it, but I've never experienced the stopping of my mind. My mind is continuously noisy, compulsive. It continuously worries and thinks.

So what can you tell me, they ask. There are also a few questions on meditation, the use, the purpose, usefulness, or otherwise of meditation. And I'd like to bring the two together, the two questions, especially if the mind is incessantly active, even here as you sit here, if you cannot notice the gaps, if you cannot be attentive to the gaps, now make sure that this is actually the truth, because you may actually notice the gaps for a moment.

There may be a momentary cessation, but because you're so used to listening to your mind, the mind is saying, no, nothing is going on. I don't get it. Maybe you do briefly.

However, it may be if your mind has such overpowering momentum, meditation is a wonderful thing. There is a meditation, there are different methods. One could say, of course, that being in the body is a kind of meditation.

Feeling the inner body, directing attention into the inner body is a kind of meditation. The way it's presented here is in a non-formal, formalized way. I just feel that.

And it may be that people whose mind is extremely, extremely active may need a somewhat more formal approach to being in the body. And so there's a beautiful meditation technique, vipassana, that directs your attention slowly and gradually into the body. So that would be a good thing to take up the practice of that.

And there are also mantras. If used rightly, they should stop the mind and replace all the various mental activities with just that, the mantra. And eventually, of course, the mantra needs to come to an end, and then the stillness is there.

The Buddha, Buddhism has designed for hopeless cases the counting meditation, not hopeless, no. Where you count mentally from one to 10 and 10 to one, or I think maybe you start at 100, I don't remember. But you just, you count backwards and forwards and backwards and forwards.

And then that gives your mind something to do. But at least it becomes more focused. And once the chaos of the mind has become a more focused kind of noise, it's easier eventually to drop it once the chaotic noise has become focused noise.

You can more easily drop once the noise has become focused, then you could drop the chaos. It's hard to drop the chaos, except in great suffering. The aim of all meditation, of course, is presence.

Eventually, any technique needs to be let go of. If there's anybody here who feels angry at that statement, it's a good sign that it's time to let go. Because there's a new identification with form, my method that I'm so good at, that I've spent 20 years getting better at.

So Vipassanā is excellent. They claim, and it may well be true, whether they have some sutras to prove it, but who knows how old they are. But it may well be true that Vipassanā is one of the original meditations taught by the Buddha.

But it seems that the Buddha also taught another meditation that is breath awareness. And that can be practiced not just as a meditation, that when you sit in a particular way, but to be aware of your breathing is related already to being in the body because the breath flows into the body. To notice your breath, to feel your in and out breath is helpful.

It does bring you into the now. When you do it for any length of time, you soon

encounter the threshold of boredom because observing your breath is not interesting. And then if you stay with it, you will pass through the threshold of boredom.

And then observing your breath is quite peaceful, the coming and going. And you notice great subtleties about your breath. You notice, for example, that at the end of each out breath, there's a momentary cessation.

In breath hasn't started yet. You're neither breathing in or out. And that's a point of great peace, if you can notice that.

A very peaceful, and also the end of the in breath is a momentary cessation. Before the out breath starts, you can watch that. Nature does it.

They say the whole universe breathes in and out. If that is true, it may well be, because it's as above, so below. They say the entire universe expands.

Maybe it does. And then comes together again into one. And then it happens again.

And the heart does that. And the seasons do that. This season is a kind of out breath.

Fall, autumn, nature is breathing, has come to the end of the out breath. And sometimes even when you get warm days in autumn, they are maybe the same temperature almost as summer. It has a different energy quality to it.

It is stiller. It's moving towards cessation. Nature has come to the end of the out breath.

Fall is the out breath. And the end of the out breath is the equivalent of death. And that's why the autumn days can be so peaceful.

Sometimes you can even sense the stillness in the air. Nature becomes, is ready to rest. So everywhere, you really have this, the in and out breath.

It's a little death. Each time you breathe out, it's a little death. And so you go into that death and realize when you reach the point of death, the end of the out breath, you haven't disappeared.

It's the deepest peace there. So that, now to come to another question, these are just happened to be a few that I remember. A few questions on how to bring awareness into the everyday world.

Some people say, when I'm out in nature, it's wonderful. There's stillness. When I'm sitting here in the group, it's wonderful.

Stillness arises. But the moment I go back into the city and my usual activities, it's gone. How to bring it into that?

And of course, when you're in nature, your mind is not being stimulated because you're

not surrounded by mind made things. When you're in the city, everything around you is made by the human mind. And there is a collective energy field that is nervous mental activity.

That's why cities are so noisy. The inner noise becomes externalized and then manifests as machines. And amplifiers.

Producing so-called music. Very hard to find a restaurant these days where you're not bombarded with noise. And when you say, would you mind turning it down a little?

What's wrong with you? And then there's your workplace, probably dominated by nervous mental energy, like most workplaces are. Even places that could potentially be places of great peace and healing, they're very nervous.

Hospitals are very nervous. Schools are very nervous. They're getting more and more nervous.

School teacher, the most stressful, one of the most stressful of all jobs. Only 50 years ago, it was one of the most comfortable jobs. It was great.

So bring in a little little returns to presence into the noise as you go about your activities. How to do that? Just little things.

You can even make a list of three, four, five things that you can do each day, periodically, simply to bring some return to presence. You may put next to your computer, a little card that says, can you feel your feet? Can you feel your hands?

Or you may put in the bathroom, if they let you in the office, take two or three conscious breaths. When the phone rings, don't jump to it. Let it ring twice and then answer it.

And during that time, don't be in an inner state of, okay, I'm just holding back before I answer it. But no, give it, allow it to ring. It wants to ring, that's what it's doing.

So you actually watch or listen to the ringing, you allow it, it goes, whatever sound it makes these days. And there you are, you look at the phone and you hear the sound. You've created a spaciousness inside.

And that which drove you deeper and deeper into mind and into noise is reversed. Every time it rings, it becomes an instrument for some space, just a little bit of space to rise inside you. And nobody would even notice that it took two more rings before you answered it.

If there are steps, you can walk up and down the steps. Consciously, instead of making each step a means to an end, in other words, you're already where you'd want to be mentally. You're being pulled by the next moment to the next thing.

You take the opportunity to take one step at a time. You don't even have to slow down after a while. You can actually walk fast without being pulled to where you need to get, without being pulled away from this moment.

That's extremely enjoyable. It doesn't mean now as presence, you bring presence into everyday life that you necessarily have to slow down. At first, it may slow you down a little because it's an unusual way of doing things.

But after a while, you realize that there's no need to slow down. If you actually, there needs, something needs to be done fast, you've suddenly seen your hands are moving fast. You're putting this here, packing your suitcase to get to the airport, you're running late.

And yet suddenly, there's only each movement and looking what it is that needs to be put in without even noise because there's only the looking now. There's an opening of a drawer. You see.

There's this right action that comes out of presence. You don't think, okay, what do I need? You can actually look and it happens.

And then you walk fast and you enjoy the energy of that. And then you shut it and then you run down the stairs still without being pulled because if you are pulled away from the now into the future, that is the mental projection. So the mind projects itself there and says, yeah, I need to be there.

And then you're being pulled out of yourself and it's called stress. And so you know when, but they also speak of stress in metal, which stress means there's one pull this way and one pull that way. And eventually it breaks.

There's too much stress in metal. So humans live in continuous stress in this mad world and stress is a form of fear. I need to be there.

So you bring in first into little things, presence, there's the phone. You could have a flower next to your computer screen. There's a flower.

I always make sure there's a flower there and something natural because everything else, if you're in an office, is mind made. There's a flower there and periodically you look at it, truly look, just half a minute, a minute. The mind will tell you that you cannot spare 30 seconds to look at the flower.

You just don't have the time. This cannot be true. Everybody has 30 seconds occasionally.

If you can enter the body easily, feel that in your place of work, a great opportunity if you can do that, it's the most wonderful transformation. Whenever somebody speaks to

you on the phone or in person, while you listen to that person, feel the aliveness in the inner body. And now what is speaking to you is the human mind.

It will try to get you entangled in what it's saying. But now you're rooted here. You listen from there.

And can you function in that way? Yes. Can you still reply intelligently or are you just going to make unintelligible sounds?

No, you may be surprised. That intelligible words come out of your mouth if you need to reply. They may be more intelligent than you would have said otherwise.

Anytime there's a meeting, dreadful things, meetings, committee meetings, conference tables, everybody has their agenda. Everybody has their power positions. Everybody's fighting everybody else or two temporarily get together to fight those other two and all that madness around the table.

If there's only one human being who is in the body, it's often enough to change the entire energy field of the meeting. Even if it isn't, even if it doesn't do that, it gives you a degree of peace while you sit there. You will probably speak less, but when you speak, it is more likely that people will listen because at last somebody is saying something new and meaningful.

It does not come from ego. So in that sense, this healing is taking place through you, through not the personal you, but through this form, healing is happening. So you're not doing it just for yourself because if one person becomes transformed in that way and brings in a different vibrational energy field, then things will change around them.

If they are capable of change. Some structures are so heavy, old mind-made human structures, certain organizations. Some may be too heavy.

They will just have to crumble eventually and they will sooner or later, probably sooner. Many other structures are still capable of change because there are humans in there. They're basically all mind structures.

If you need to escape from the office, go to the bathroom, shut yourself in there and sit there for two minutes, not complaining about the mad world, but perhaps being aware of your breathing. And this is another little one that you can introduce anywhere, being aware, watching the breath as you go up and down the elevator. Wonderful.

Who says that you cannot watch your breath when you're in the elevator? If that is at your workplace and you yourself will come up with little things on how to introduce spaces into that which seems to make it impossible to have space, those surroundings. And yet it's not impossible.

I will dip my hand in the basket now. Take a few. There was a big one here.

Maybe that's, it works. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha. Another big one got blown away by the wind.

Sometimes it doesn't. Ha ha ha. Ha ha ha.

Ha ha ha. When I let go of my story, I feel less alive. What is the value of going to a place where I feel less alive?

It is true. Better than to be dead is to have a dramatic story. Better than not feel any aliveness is to have some drama, something interesting going on in your life.

And so you see often in relationships, the partners feel if they are not going through their periodic drama, they don't have a relationship anymore. It feels the aliveness is going out of it. But the story is a secondary kind of aliveness.

The drama that people get involved in, yes, it's a way of feeling some life in the absence of feeling something much deeper and more genuine. But you have to step out of the story temporarily to find that. And a good starting place is going into the body, not just for a minute, but make it into a daily practice for a while and go deeply within and sense the enormous amount of vibrant life that is already there in the body.

Bring attention to your sense perceptions and notice the enormous power of your conscious attention. So it's a question of leaving your habitual world where you felt at home and entering something new. And at first, the new, you may not recognize.

It happens also when people first encounter some stillness and it's such a strange place that they feel they want to run back to the mental noise. And they say, well, I encountered some stillness, but it felt completely empty. And so I don't see why I should go there.

I compare these people to someone who just spent four hours in a noisy discotheque and then steps out and the heavy doors close behind and you're out in the countryside with only very subtle noises of the night going on and a breeze, but at first you step out, you hear nothing. It will feel dreadful, that silence, because you're so used to that noise. So some, you might even, in fear, run back into the discotheque, but at least that's familiar.

You have to stay for a while with the stillness because the power of that is more subtle. It's more powerful, but also much more, it has a different density to it than the density of the mind, a different frequency. So you become attuned to that frequency.

So you stay in the emptiness for a while and then realize the emptiness is also fullness.

Now, the desire to step out of your story only comes really when the story becomes too unpleasant to want to dwell in it. So it may be that some people have to wait a little bit longer until their story turns into something that they don't want to be in anymore.

And eventually that will happen. There is greater aliveness, true aliveness outside of the story. What determines the intensity of a person's wish to be in the present moment?

What one could perceive as the wish to be in the present moment is the arising of presence in you. In that sense, there's nothing you can do about it. When the wish appears, presence is already arising.

It's not separate from it. But can you make it arise? No.

So what determines whether or not presence is arising in you? We could say grace, evolution, how much you've suffered. Maybe they're all the same.

But in any case, it is not something that you can want to happen and you wouldn't. You wouldn't even want to be present if presence were not arising. You wouldn't even ask the question how to be more present.

So it is arising. The wish to be present is the arising of presence. It's ultimately not personal.

And yet from a personal perspective where language comes from and where we have to speak from a lot of the time, we can say that you can help the arising of presence being receptive to it. But it's all really something that the universe is doing through you. When you think you are doing it, and it's great to believe that I can choose to be present.

I can choose not to answer this phone. And let it ring twice. That's what it looks like.

But how is it possible for you to even do that if there were not enough presence, you couldn't do it, know what you want to do it. You would say, what is the point in waiting? I mean, it's ringing, answer it.

And maybe that's where your boss will say when he sees what you're not answering. Ultimately, it's not you because you are not separate from the totality of the universe. It just seems that way.

But it's good to feel that you can choose. Ultimately, the universe is choosing to be present through you. Nobody else can choose.

Well, there's an interesting question. Maybe it's connected with this. You've given us many portals to the stillness within, but I find that in day-to-day life, my mind is in 100% control and does not want to be free of itself.

How do we become aware when we don't want to? When you don't want to, you don't

want to. But there is something hidden in the question, which to me signifies that something in you does want to.

Otherwise, you would neither be sitting here nor be asking that question. You'd be watching TV somewhere. I get discouraged when I think, well, Eckhart didn't awaken through the practice of presence.

He awakened through a sudden act of grace that completely erased his mind's habit of resisting the present moment and so did many other teachers I know of. Presence was the result of your awakening, but it wasn't the method. Are you sure ordinary people...

Are you sure ordinary people can dissolve their ego through the practice of presence when that's not how you did it? I worry that I'm trying to break down the boulder of my ego with a pocket knife when what I really need is a stick of dynamite. Sometimes it happens with a pocket knife, but this isn't a pocket knife.

This here is a sword. Now, it may well be that even the sword is not enough and it may be that you need a stick of dynamite in the form of some disaster. And if you need it, you'll get it.

If you truly need it, life will provide. Life provides what you need and then you will see the grace that is hidden there when it comes. And another part of the question implied, is it something we can do or is it something that just happens to us?

The doing and the happening are really one. When you think you're doing, it's also happening to you, but it's good to feel that you're doing it. That's meant to be part of the happening.

The mind can't figure that out because the mind says it's either this or that. The mind likes to separate. That's how the mind works.

It cuts it into two. It's this or that. How can it be both?

But it is. Something else that this touches on, a sudden liberation from being possessed by the mind or a gradual becoming free through perhaps some applied spiritual practice. What is true that ultimately, spiritual practice or technique, let us say as such, I don't know of anybody who has become liberated by a technique, but they may have become liberated when they dropped the technique.

The technique may have had its place as a ladder that they then dropped or as a raft. The Buddha uses the analogy of a raft crossing the river. You use it to cross the river.

When you've reached the other side, you do not continue to carry it around with you, the raft. It remains. It's my raft.

Not all teachers, not to all of them, did it come all at once. Many, yes. For example,

many of you know the teachings of Nisargadatta, who wrote one of the greatest spiritual books.

Well, he didn't write it, he spoke it. I Am That. And he was, had a stall in Bombay selling handmade cigarettes.

One would have thought, this is not very good karma. You're making other people ill. And he smoked quite heavily, apparently.

And he just visited a guru, a teacher, who said, well, just remember that you are consciousness. Just be aware of the I am in whatever you do. Feel yourself as consciousness.

Oh, okay. And then he went off back to his daily business and he applied, can we call that a technique? It's too simple to be called a technique.

All he remembered is, I am consciousness. And he felt, attempted to feel the I, the deeper I that underlies all experiences, awareness itself. And a few years later, it had emerged fully.

It didn't come all at once, but it didn't take very long. And then suddenly, he started speaking wisdom. A cigarette seller, almost illiterate.

Suddenly, people would come and ask him questions and intensely alive and wise answers came out of his mouth. Something had come through the form. And so the cigarette seller became Nisargadatta Maharaj.

In India, they like giving people names. Maharaj means the great king, spiritually, of course. So this is one teacher to whom it came not suddenly, although it didn't take very long.

After a few years, it became a continuous living presence. Presence was continuous in him. Now, as it is becoming a more widespread phenomenon and this is happening, many people experience at first as a lessening of suffering, a considerable lessening of suffering in their lives.

They can breathe, there's some space. There may still be drama occasionally, but there's space also. To many people, it is coming gradually.

And to others, it is coming in an accelerated form. In this culture, these days, it often happens through an illness, AIDS, cancer. And I know quite a few to whom it came in that way.

And I could see, and I told them, you are on an accelerated course. What otherwise probably would have taken much, much longer is happening now through your illness that is forcing you into presence. And others don't need an illness.

It's happening. I cannot tell you whether you're better off with an illness or without it. If you choose presence, and this is only a limited perspective, it's not the ultimate truth, then it's less likely that you'll need to be hit over the head in order to crack the remaining shell.

If you die to the past every moment and return to just the freshness of this, don't carry personal past, the past in relationships, the past that you have with people. Yesterday, they said that or whatever. Meet a person as if for the first time.

Look at them and be there as a presence, not as a heavy, personal past. Be the attention. Be the attention that is looking at them because that's what you are.

Be the consciousness that flows through your eyes as you look at them and listen to them. You are that. And then you, the beautiful expression in the Course in Miracles that is used for the present moment is the holy instant.

To realize the only place that is sacred in life is this moment. If you only pay attention to it, you notice the sacredness of whatever form it takes, even if it looks horrible at first because what looks horrible at first will be some kind of death, some kind of breaking down, and there also is sacredness. We already pointed to that, particularly there.

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If you only pay attention to it, you notice the sacredness of whatever form it takes, even if it looks horrible at first, because what looks horrible at first will be some kind of death, some kind of breaking down, and there also is sacredness. We already pointed to that, particularly there. How can I get over or release the outrage I, among others, feel about the political situation in the United States?

Bush and his policies, which led to the invasion of Iraq, the dismantlement of the U.S. social services and civil liberties. Should I really let go, release this outrage? Outrage, I assume, is a kind of anger.

There are many places where you can look in this world, countries, places, institutions, governments, and you see varying degrees of human unconsciousness at work. Wherever you look, you see the manifestation of human unconsciousness. Unconsciousness, of course, I'm not saying that they are totally as, they are identified with the mind and the old patterns of the mind.

The collective ego. And wherever you look still, you see it, because the change that is happening in humanity, to a large extent, is on the inner. It only slowly reaches the outer levels where you can actually detect it.

It takes a while before it reaches an institution, before it reaches a politician, before it reaches somebody in a position of power, but occasionally, it already happens. Russia had a relatively enlightened human being after having had succession of leaders who seemed, you didn't even know whether they were alive or dead when you saw them, when they were having their, and there was actually speculation. There was.

There was. Is whoever, Brezhnev, or whoever the names were, is he still alive, or did they just put a puppet there that went? And some others speculated that it was an actor acting because they didn't dare say that he had died, so they gave an actor the role to play.

And this maybe have been true. We don't know. And that's one form of unconsciousness, and the entire structure of that regime was started from an ideal.

The mind saw something beautiful. We must have equality. No personal possessions.

But nothing had changed in the human mind. The structures were still in place, so we got that instead. And then suddenly, there was Gorbachev who, compared to the previous leaders, was a Buddha in consciousness.

I remember once a remark he made on television when he was still president. They asked, there was a little scandal about some Western spies and Eastern spies had been thrown out of the country. Some, the usual thing.

And what about this scandal about the Russian spies and the Russian embassy? And he said, well, as the wise man said, this too will pass. And it did.

However, it is rare for this shift that is happening in human consciousness to reach the outer forms, the institutions, the political, the government, the institutions, whatever it may be, the outer forms, business, business is the way businesses are run, companies. In most cases, they're dominated still by the old egoic consciousness. And I've spoken to some people who work in corporations who say there's so much infighting and useless power struggles going on within the corporation, it's a miracle that anything gets done at all.

And everybody lives in fear and they're not happy. So wherever you look in the world, you will find still on the surface of things, varying degrees of unconsciousness, and only occasionally something else comes through already here and there. It does.

Even on television, sometimes you see it. You see there's some conscious being speaking or a conscious film that has a message pointing to conscious awareness or pointing to stillness. It happens.

Maybe it happens more now. It's happening more. It's always wonderful.

I love it when I see a film that points to the truth. And there are quite a few now. Not the majority yet, of course.

But there are so many things that you could feel angry about if you personalize human unconsciousness. If you make it into an identity, then you say these dreadful bastards, look what they are doing. Human unconsciousness.

Jesus saw it clearly when he said they know not what they do. In other words, they are unconscious. And so a country sometimes also can vary.

A country can be pulled into unconsciousness to some extent by an unconscious leader. Germany is a best example of what happened there. A country that, compared to others on the planet, was one of the most highly-developed cultures scientifically, literature, culture, philosophy, music, and all that, to no avail.

They dropped right down into unconsciousness. Back. But this wouldn't have happened if there had not been a strong, enormous amount of collective pain body still in the country.

And an enormous amount of collective ego despite the so-called cultural achievements. So when you see it as unconsciousness, you're less likely to feel angry about it because anger does not really fulfill a very useful purpose. It doesn't really change things.

It contributes more. You're being pulled into unconsciousness through anger. You become unconscious yourself.

See it for what it is. And then the next step is, what can you do? You have to accept that this is so, which does not mean there's nothing you can do.

Once you have accepted that there's still a considerable amount of unconsciousness here on the planet, wherever you see it, wherever you feel it's mostly, you feel called upon to do something in this or that area. It could be the destruction of nature. It could be the polluting of oceans and rivers.

It could be on the political scene, American politics, other politics, Middle East, great focal point of unconsciousness. It's just look at the situation there. The instinct is no stop, no pause to the fighting between the two.

And they're both victims of the other. And they're both totally convinced that they are victims of the other. So when you see it, then you can point out certain things, write, speak to people, have a website that says the truth about such and such, so and so, and just state the facts as they are.

This is how it is. If you want to, you can stand at a street corner and hold up something, a sign. A few people may start talking to you.

They're more likely to listen if you're not angry, but simply explain, look, this is how it is. They're more likely to watch your website if it doesn't have this, the screaming anger about it. You're not convincing anybody who has the opposite view to yours, who says Bush is the greatest leader that has happened to America in a long time.

You're not going to convince them with your anger that you are right. Anger will, their own position will become more entrenched. And so if you're right, then state the facts.

This is how it is. Explain. If you can see the futility of anger, it's more likely to drop away.

And there's something more powerful then. You can speak with passion, without anger, but passion about what you feel is true. Be aware, very careful with identifying with mental positions though when you do that.

Identifying with a position that's me or us against. Be very careful with making wrong

others, groups of people or individuals. Because it draws you back into unconsciousness.

Don't personalize it in that way. When doing projects of any sort, large or small, I find I must keep my intent fiercely in mind or I end up doing something else. By employing this fierce focus, am I actually being counterproductive in the long run or in the big picture?

The focus, when you have a project that needs to be done, finished. Now, the questioner is saying, keeping my intent fiercely in mind. Now, the intent, I assume, is where you want to get to, the finished project, where you want to, the point that you want to arrive at to get it done.

So my intent is getting to that point where the project is finished. My intent is drawing up a plan, a business plan or the architect as the building draws up to a huge high-rise office building or whatever, or there may be a project of any kind that you need to finish. There's the intent.

And that's very much, I compare it to a journey. When you're traveling from here to there, maybe you're walking. Let's say the rudimentary form, the early form of journeying, of being on a pilgrimage or journeying.

Tourists didn't exist at that time. It was unknown. The people would journey because they had to leave their country or they went on some kind of army expedition or pilgrimage, spiritual journey.

That was perhaps the most common journey that individuals would undertake, pilgrimage. You know where you need to go. The question is, what is it that takes up most of your attention?

The place that you need to get to or the step you're taking at this moment? What's more important? Now, in many cases, these days, what people are obsessed with is the outcome where they need to get to and that causes the stress.

I need to get this done, finished, over with. And I'm on a limited time scale here. Can't waste any minute.

It needs to get done. So there's an excessive projection to the finished end product, the point in the future that I need to get to. And then the doing itself, it is done in a hurried way.

The rest is the energy. Okay, come on. What's the next, next?

It doesn't matter what you're doing. Let's say you have to complete something that you manufacture with your hands, but this thing has to be ready by tomorrow. The world is mad these days.

It always tells you that you have no time. You have to do it by tomorrow. And so you

become excessively focused on tomorrow.

I have to get this, the finished product. Or you're thinking that I can sell this. When it's finished, I can sell it.

So it's done quickly with the end in mind. The end takes over your mind, occupies your mind more than the present moment, and you reduce the present moment to a means to an end. That's how a lot of doing happens these days.

And all that doing is of low quality. Any doing that reduces this moment to a means to an end to a future moment is not high quality doing. And you can observe that when you observe how a person works, whether they are totally attentive, give total attention to whatever they are doing at this moment, which does not mean that they don't know where they are going to in their project.

That is peripherally in their field of attention. The point they want to get to is peripherally in their field of attention. Like a traveler who is walking towards Rome, let's say, and they are taking this step and are fully conscious of each step they are taking, but peripherally they know where they are going.

It's over there. It's a long way away, a long way. But they know it's over there.

So the focal point of there is the quality of your step at this moment, because if you're not careful, you'll stumble. You'll never get to Rome. The quality of each step is what matters.

And the getting is secondary. It is on the periphery. You have the goal in mind also, but it does not occupy your mind.

It does not overpower you. And so then the present moment is not a means to an end. You give your full attention to this moment.

I have seen a few, not many, and some of them are highly so-called effective and successful people who did not become successful through strain and stress. Some did, and they are very unhappy and won't be around for long. But I have observed a few who, whoever they meet, whoever they talk to, or whatever is presented to them, they are totally there with it.

If you come to them and ask them a question, they may be high up, so to speak, in social terms, the CEO of this or that corporation, and somebody comes to them, and there are a few, not many, who will give you total attention. No matter who you are. And that is wonderful.

Everybody loves doing what they tell them to do because they feel so valued because attention is the greatest gift you can give. Full attention. You are acknowledging that

human being beyond the roles that they play in the world.

So they are giving everything their fullest attention, and they are extremely effective at what they do. Others look as if they were effective, but everything they do is contaminated with extremely stressful raw energy that is really a form of suffering. And they spread unhappiness.

So it is possible to work effectively, in fact, more effectively, by focusing on what it is at hand here, right now, to do, without losing, in your peripheral vision, the place you need to get to. That remains. Here, there.

One step, Rome is there. But this step is here, and this step is more important. Whenever you see any work of quality that's been made by a human being, it means some attention must have gone into it, some human attention.

Somewhere, there must have been someone who did not reduce the moment in which that was being made to a means to an end, where it gave. So you have works of art that have that quality. Handicraft things made by artisans in the original way, not under stress of having to produce, because attention is also loving care.

Another aspect of attention is, whatever you give attention to, there is a loving care that flows into the doing. So if you give attention to a human being that comes into the now, the field of now, and this is so beautiful, to give each human being that comes into your field of vision to you with this or that demand or question or whatever it may be, give them full and complete attention. That doesn't mean you get drawn into their story.

You don't give attention necessarily to their mind stream and energize that. You simply give attention. There's a spaciousness.

There is the awareness, the current of awareness flows into the, in the same way you look at a tree. You hold, and that is beautiful. So see how things work in that new way and observe if you can find anybody who is present in doing something, observe them.

It's wonderful to watch somebody at work in that way and it won't really be perceived as work by them. It's joyful. Here's this one question that has appeared about 10 times in different forms.

How would you suggest imparting these teachings to children?

[Speaker 2] (7:46:23 - 7:46:25)

Lesson five continued on disc seven.

[Speaker 1] (7:46:29 - 8:15:48)

Here's this one question that has appeared about 10 times in different forms. How would

you suggest imparting these teachings to children? I assume that either you live with children or that you work with children or that you may have the desire perhaps to write a book for children, whatever.

If you live with children or work with children, then of course primary in imparting the teachings to children is not through words, but through living, living the teaching. Specially applies if you have children at home. If you live presence, if you embody living presence, then they will catch it from you and you don't need to say that much, but there may be moments when they are receptive and perhaps a word or two may come out of your mouth pointing to presence because the children live in a culture that knows as yet nothing of presence.

It is possibly likely that they go to a school that is dominated by nervous mind energy unless you have chosen already a relatively conscious school for them. They do exist here and there. But if not, if they are still part of the mainstream culture then in a way you need to counteract that at home.

That otherwise they will be very nervous children because school is making them tense, stressed and nervous. So most homes lack presence and when you go in there you see in many cases it's a madhouse. It's your job to bring in presence.

And again, we come back now to what we just spoke of in the previous question. Giving your children your fullest attention is the greatest gift. Many parents these days never listen to their children because they have the next thing already that they need to do and they are busy anyway, how was school?

Okay, okay. And what do you have to do now? Okay.

Never, when in the listening, it doesn't matter so much what the children are telling you. What matters is that you, the space that arises as you listen. The spacious presence that arises as you listen to the child.

Giving them space to be. Oh, that's how the teachings are imparted by living it in that way. Perhaps also certain things, if you have very young children where the mind is just starting up in them to see if you can keep them aware that words and concepts are never the reality.

Are not everything. Particularly at a stage when they demand to be fed with words and concepts. When they're at the age where they ask, what's this, what's that for?

What's that? And 100 times a day they ask, what's that? Because they're quickly, the mind is absorbing.

It needs to do that, it seems. The mind is absorbing words. It wants to know.

But the openness also disappears. So when you teach new words and or show them this is that, what's this? There's so much you can say about this leaf to a child instead of saying, it's a leaf.

As you say it, you put it in the child's hand. You encourage the child to look so that the child does not stop looking the moment he or she has learned the word. Because that's what the mind does.

The true looking isn't happening anymore. The word takes the place of the reality. It becomes immediately a screen.

And so that to reduce that, when you explain as much as you can, you may not be able to do it all the time. But when you explain something, stay with the reality. And perhaps instead of saying, it's a leaf, say, we call it a leaf.

Because it's not a leaf. This is the illusion that when you attach a word to something you know what it is. You have no idea what it is.

You've just attached a word to it. And that's how people live. They live in this make believe world that they know.

All they have is a collection of labels. And so that that doesn't happen to the child. See, as you teach language and words and concepts, see if you can keep the child in touch with the reality that is more alive, deeper, more mysterious than any concept.

And here you can teach so much. You can teach the child to, can you see the colors? And can you see the shadings here?

Isn't it beautiful? Can you feel that? Yes, it's called a leaf, but can you feel it?

Can you see the colors? And can, do you know what's happening to it? No, why is it so beautiful?

What's happening to it? It's dying. It's dying.

Soon it'll be gone. And then the child may ask another, dying? What's that?

Well, I'm not saying what words will come out of your mouth because you will be present at that moment. But then through this little thing where before you said, that's a leaf. It's all, or you might even know what tree it is.

So you have attached another label to it. So you can give labels. The mind needs it, but there's far more.

Always remind the child, point out that which is beyond the words and concepts. And so that would be wonderful for a child to grow up in that way so that the mind is not totally

possessed by words and concepts. So it remains, the seeing remains, the hearing remains.

You hear a bird and then encourage the child to hear more, to hear, can you hear? Encourage, and children will be receptive to that. Of course, there are many things in our culture that are there to stimulate the mind, to draw them out of their body, to teach a child to feel the body.

They are very ready to feel that, make it into a little game. Can you feel the inner body? Can you feel the aliveness that's there?

And they can, and they will love it. And then, if possible, reduce the amount of gadgets they play with because they all work on the level of abstraction, computer screens, video game screens, TV, pulling them out of their body, pulling their attention out into some hypnotic trance. That gives them a secondary feeling of false aliveness.

The video game. So much so that when they stop playing, they don't feel alive anymore. What's the name?

I need some other fix now. This is what the culture is doing to the children. I need another stimulus, another fix, otherwise I will feel dead.

And then they look for the next thing, and there's plenty of things. Switch something on. Put headphones on.

Whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop. And then you teach the children about the pain body. Children have them too, some more than others.

So when the child goes into a rage or a screaming fit, or maybe the pain body will take a different form. The child totally withdraws into a corner and doesn't want to talk anymore. At the slightest, the slightest thing might provoke the pain body.

It's the same with adults. And there's then far more pain than you could ever have imagined coming out of that little situation. Some children become screaming monsters for a few minutes.

Ooh, ooh. In the middle of it, you can't say anything, but when it's subsided, you can say, what was that? Where did that come from?

What did that feel like? Does it feel good? And so you can direct attention within when the pain body's not active, and then say, do you think it may happen again?

So we will see if it happens again, and we can catch it when just it starts. And next time, you can see, the child starts, oh, is it back? Maybe it has a name.

The red big monster back? Oh, can you feel it? Not at that point, whether they say they

can feel it or not depends to what extent the pain body has already taken possession of their mind.

If they scream at you when you ask, can you feel it, then it's too late to feel it. Or they throw something. And then again afterwards, you say, what was that?

It was back, wasn't it? And then you say, did you notice that mommy or daddy also has that? Do you remember the other day when mommy screamed at you or mommy dropped something and started shouting and screaming at daddy?

Threw him out of the house. That was the same thing. Mommy didn't catch it then either.

And so how wonderful if a child can grow up in a conscious environment, family, surroundings that way. Not necessarily totally enlightened, just conscious. Not necessarily a family with continuous and permanent peace.

Threw out. So that is imparting the teaching to children. Present moment, direct their attention, redirect their attention to present moment, again and again, this, to looking, to listening, to touching, away from how you reduce the amount they spend addicted to the screens and electronic things.

You have to somehow do it and replace it with something more vital, more alive. And they can feel that it's more vital and more alive. Pain bodies have an enormous capacity to pull you in.

Even the pain body of a child has that already. When it starts screaming, it wants a negative reaction from you. That's what the pain body always wants.

Give me more pain. And so it requires considerable presence to hold the space. And many parents just are completely flabbergasted when the children, the angel turns into a monster.

What is going on here? And then they react. The more unconscious they are, the stronger, the more violent their reaction will be.

Their own pain body reacts. They know not what they do. There are several questions.

There was just one here and about six or seven others on prayer, the use of prayer, how to use it, whether to use it at all. Now that word can mean many different things. It can mean going to church and saying, please God, let me have that job.

I promise I'll be good. If you only let me have that job. I practiced that as a child.

Please let there be some peace in my family. Didn't work. So from somebody who went to church every Sunday, then at 12, I must have decided that there was no point anymore.

But there are many different kinds of prayer. There are petitionary prayers. You would like something.

They may sometimes work, but you never know whether it was the prayer or what you would have gotten it anyway. There are more effective ways if you really feel that you need or want something, but be careful, it won't make you happy, but that's another story. Okay.

If you really feel you want something, you can use affirmation and visualization. And when you get it, enjoy it. Don't look for yourself in it.

Don't look to it for deep inner fulfillment or some kind of permanently enhanced sense of self or permanent happiness. Nothing that you achieve can give you that. Knowing that, you can play around with the world of form.

And Jesus already explained how to pray for something. And that is what he said, when you pray for something, feel as if you already had it, as if it had already been given. So you're not saying, I want something, because if you say, I want something, it affirms a lack.

It says on the other side, the unexpressed side, I don't have it. So when you say, I want it, you're also stating that you don't have it. So you're praying at the same time not to have it.

If you affirm and visualize that it is already here and you feel as if you had it, that the feeling that you want to get from it, you already have that feeling. And that's the truth, because you're imagining that it's going to give you feelings of peace or happiness, which is always in you already. If you go, just go inside deep enough.

But let me, I don't want to discourage you from playing around in the world of form. So why not try it out? Visualize that it is already yours.

You have it, and you feel what you feel as you have it. Thank you for giving me that. It's beautiful, whatever it may be.

The house, you're already in it, feels good. Thank you. It's nice to have that house, thanks, yeah.

It's already there. It's more likely to manifest in that way. And then you move in, and you go from there.

Then you sit there. You feel, oh, great, I've got it. And then the old mind patterns come up in the new house.

Then there are other prayers that are used, they're all in different religions, and they can be called pointers. They are more advanced prayers. They are pointers to a particular

state.

It's not that uttering those words produces magically the state. What matters when you utter certain words or prayers, then most of them are short, is really the stillness that comes after that. Buddhism, for example, has the metta meditation, which is a kind of prayer which starts with, I believe, may everybody on this planet be well and happy.

And then after you've uttered those words, there's a stillness. And then it says, may everybody in this country be well and happy. Metta means loving kindness.

And then there's a stillness. May every being in this city be well and happy. Stillness.

May everybody in this house be well and happy. May I be well and happy. And it takes you into a stillness.

And the being of well and happy is already there in the stillness. It's there, it spreads. You could become still, it would spread anyway, even without the words.

Because whatever state of consciousness you are in affects the totality, and in turn is the totality manifesting through you. Oh, we have the beautiful Christian prayer by St. Francis, I believe. I believe, let me be an instrument of thy peace where there's hatred, let me sow love, and so on.

Where there's injury, pardon, and so on. And those prayers are openings. They open a door.

And they always, they take you into stillness. And they are beautiful. Most prayers operate still on the level of duality.

Even when you say, let me be an instrument of thy peace, you are still using the language of duality. There's me, and thy, presumably, is God. There is me, and there is God.

So God is perceived still as something or someone separate from me. Nevertheless, it's a beautiful prayer. And if stillness follows the prayer, in the stillness you have transcended duality.

There is, some of you are familiar with the Course in Miracles. Course in Miracles, many of those lessons are a kind of prayer. And most of the lessons in it operate on the level of duality, speaking of God as he, and addressing God as something or someone outside of you.

Course in Miracles meets you where you are on the level of duality. But as you reach the end of the course, without you noticing it, the lessons become more non-dualistic. And in the end, you end up in stillness.

And it says, the use for words is almost over now, towards the end of the course. So it meets you where you are, and takes you by the hand. It only works if you can get hold, if Christian terminology is appealing to you.

To some, it is not. And then there are many other ways. Don't use something that you don't like, the form of which you don't like.

So most prayers are dualistic, and then you can have, although the meta-prayer in Buddhism is let all beings be well and happy, it's fine, there's no duality really there, although you're still saying there are many beings. Ultimately, there's only oneness. But what can you do?

You're using language. And then there are short things that are almost like mantras, just single words, peace, for example. The word itself doesn't produce peace, but it is a pointer.

Stillness. One of the most beautiful pointers to be found in the Old Testament, be still and know that I am God. And this is why, if we can call that a prayer, it is a kind of prayer.

It is a prayer where duality is transcended. And it is a miraculous prayer. The words of which it consists are all synonyms for one single thing.

Be still, know I am God. Be being, one being, sat in Sanskrit. Being and stillness are one.

It is the stillness of being itself before it comes into existence as something. Be still, know. In the stillness that is being, there is a deep knowing, non-conceptual, a deep intelligence, not words, not thoughts, deeper than thought, because it's the primordial seed of all intelligence.

Be, still, know, I am. It is the innermost sense of beingness or I am. God, the divine, the source, the one.

And you put these words together, each word signifies also the other. They're all one. Be still, know, I am God.

Miraculous. So those are advanced prayers and powerful. They put you in touch.

Be still and know that I am God is one of the most powerful and beautiful pointers to the truth. And one of those rare ones that uses language without taking you into duality. Please talk more about the pain body and how to transcend, question mark, it.

We already spoke a little bit, but there are so many questions about the pain body that we may, in tomorrow's session, talk a little bit more about it, unless something else arises in the now. Last one, perhaps, because they're cutting off the satellite dish. As someone who has done a lot of yoga and body work for many years, I always felt there

was some correlation between spirituality and good posture.

Then I saw you.

[Speaker 3] (8:15:51 - 8:16:15)

Oh. What a shock.

[Speaker 1] (8:16:24 - 8:22:46)

My first thought was, how can somebody with your posture be so blooming spiritually? And wouldn't you be even more spiritual if you did some corrective body work? My second thought was that I'm a blooming idiot.

And it's, can you tell us how you experience the body and if it ever feels like an impediment to you? That reminds me of a, I talked to Gangaji, the spiritual teacher, a couple of years ago, and she was telling me she was doing some kind of body work years ago in, I can't remember what kind. But at that time, she heard of Ramana Maharshi and became interested in the teachings and read a book.

And then she saw a picture, a photo of him, and she saw that and said, a man who has such bad posture can possibly have nothing to teach me. He will certainly have nothing to teach me if he walks like that. And it took her several years to transcend that belief.

And then she saw that it didn't matter anymore. Sometimes if the body has gone through a lot of suffering, either physical suffering or psychological suffering, it leaves traces in the body, in the very bones of the body, it leaves traces. In some cases, it's in the face.

I knew one spiritual teacher, I won't say who, who said, look at my face. I always look unhappy. Even when I'm happy, I look unhappy.

And that is because I've been unhappy, I was unhappy for so many years. He didn't really, he only looked unhappy if you saw the external features of his face. If you looked more deeply, you could see he wasn't unhappy.

But you could see the lines in his face that showed that where the trace is left behind by unhappiness. But something else was now shining through it, through the form that had been affected by the suffering. And that's the same here.

People are surprised when I tell them it's very rare that I ever feel any pain in the body. Only two years ago, I was at Omega, I had a back pain. I don't know what that was to do with.

Maybe the events in New York, I don't know. But usually, there's no pain, the body feels fine. And it's not, it doesn't seem to be a problem at all.

And something else shines through it. So the body has fulfilled its function of being an opening for that. Now, I'm not saying that in many other cases, body work is a wonderful thing to free emotions that may be stuck there, even the pain body.

It's beautiful. It's not, ultimately, it could happen to anyone at any moment. It could happen to somebody who is totally crippled.

And that has happened, too. There was a famous enlightened poet, a teacher who, hundreds of years ago, who wrote the Indian scripture called the Ashtavakra Gita. And he is said to have been a cripple.

And it didn't matter anymore. That was his suffering. Trace is left behind by the suffering.

And then the body simply became something through which presence shines. I'll put these back in the basket. I'm sorry, your question hasn't come up yet.

There are many. Thank you. Thank you.

Stay a little while, both here and if you're still there, Austin, Hollyhock. Stay a little while with the empty chair or the empty screen. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (8:22:52 - 8:23:02)

This concludes lesson five. Lesson six, questions and answers. The power of detachment and surrender.

[Speaker 1] (8:23:07 - 8:32:50)

We've had the alarm clock for the first awakening. And now comes the real awakening. For some people at Hollyhock, good morning.

That may also be the alarm clock because it's seven o'clock in the morning there. Austin, I don't know, it's eight or nine o'clock there. You may be half awake.

Here, everybody is fully awake in one sense. And perhaps also in another sense of the word. As you may have noticed, laughter was an important and is an important part of our gathering.

It's very liberating, particularly to laugh at the human condition and to laugh at one's own mind patterns because it implies that you've taken one step back, a retreat, and have seen your own patterns or your own drama that's produced by the mind patterns. And when you recognize drama as drama, it becomes also funny. Awakening, so it's not a serious business.

If you make it serious, then you've gone astray somewhere and the mind is trying to do

something. Awakening, a synonym for that, of course, is enlightenment. Another beautiful word.

Which in the English language, as it so happens, implies two things. There's light in there, enlightenment. It implies light, the light of consciousness, the clarity, the awakened consciousness, the clear seeing.

And it implies lightness in the sense of lack of heaviness. Gravity, weight, which includes seriousness because the mind made me, the egoic self, takes itself very seriously. It also takes itself very seriously in its attempt to become enlightened.

So humor, right humor, not egoic humor. Egoic humor also exists. It might be to laugh at somebody else and think, oh, I'm much, by comparison, I am much more intelligent than this silly person.

Laughter frees you up inside. And I hadn't realized until I read some of the questions to you yesterday, that every question also seemed to have a funny side. I didn't realize it until everybody started laughing.

I'm not waiting for the next sentence to come and I hope you are not either. Laughter. If we were waiting, I would be under stress and you would be impatient.

And perhaps you now realize how enjoyable it is when I'm not speaking. We will look at a few more questions, including some questions on the pain body. This is by someone who is sleepless at night.

My wife snores. My now at night is miserable. Laughter.

I have tried electronic gadgets and earplugs to no avail. How does one respond and not react? Signed, awake but only at night.

Laughter.

[Speaker 3] (8:32:50 - 8:32:51)

Laughter.

[Speaker 1] (8:33:24 - 9:05:27)

P.S. I have tried your cold soup analogy. Laughter. Sweetheart, would you please stop snoring?

It doesn't work. No, of course the cold soup method is not going to work here because snoring is an involuntary process. Laughter.

It just happens. I hope at home you have separate bedrooms. Laughter.

But here, well, any situation that you cannot change, and there are situations of that kind, or situations that you cannot change at this time, perhaps change will be possible at some point, but right now, at this moment, there's nothing one can do, whether you're in prison or, metaphorically speaking, in prison, or have some other condition, some life situation. Now, if there's truly nothing you can do, or there may be something you can do, but there are certain important reasons why perhaps you cannot take action right now. If that is truly so, if you cannot change the situation, there are only two options left.

You remove yourself or you surrender. Oh, yes, I forgot the third one. You suffer.

And that's always the case, then it's your choice which of the three you choose. Surrender, in this case, is surrender to the fact that you get woken up several times during the night and then perhaps feel sleepy during the day, but just surrender to, yes, there you are awake again. And then you might use this opportunity and just go into the body.

What else can you do? Or shake her, but then it starts again. Or you rent a tent and move into a tent.

And the thing that doesn't work and that which generates suffering is complaining mentally about the situation, about a situation that you can do nothing about right now. Complaining mentally or complaining also to others, anybody who is prepared to listen to you, you can complain about the situation. And if you observe closely, you see that something in you likes that.

Something in you feels strengthened by the complaining. And that's the false sense of self. Whenever you complain, it strengthens the false me, because you are right.

The complainer is always right. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. When is tolerance enabling and or masochism?

You may remember we talked about yes to what is, is not always a yes on the verbal external level. It's an inner attitude, an inner state that you bring to the situation. And out of that inner state of openness and alert attention, which goes with the yes to what is, alert attention, which is intelligence, out of that, the right response comes for that situation.

And the right response for that situation is not necessarily the word yes or yes, go ahead. Yes, hit me over the head is not necessarily what comes out of your mouth. Out of that, it's quite possible that the word no comes out of your mouth.

No, that's not right, that's not it. I'm not going there. So it's, be careful not to mistake that state of, because the yes to what is, is a state of consciousness.

It's not the literal, sometimes it is, but it's not always a literal yes that you agree with

whatever somebody is doing. Somebody may be at this moment committing an act of violence and it is within your field of possibility to do something about it. And then you will see the situation and you will act perhaps to stop what's happening.

Nobody can predict what you will do out of presence, but it will be right. So there is great strength in the yes to what is, very great strength. And then there is, whenever you have said what you had to say in any situation, step back into stillness.

Otherwise the mind will take over and it will become a non-ending stream of words. You have all witnessed that in other people and perhaps in yourself. People can go on and on about the same thing.

They're dragged along by a mind stream. Okay, enough, enough, okay. And then they're quiet for 20 seconds.

Oh, just one more thing. And while they are quiet for 20 seconds, you can feel the energy built up in them. And that dissolves only through, again, bringing alert attention from where you can observe the mind rather than be it.

Your speaking then becomes more powerful. Any words that you say become more powerful because they always come directly out of the stillness. The strange thing is you may have noticed almost all the questions, the answer to all the questions always takes you back to the same point, the same origin.

It's always the same answer in a way, it's in different aspects. And basically, all the questions are the same question. And once you've gone very deep into the answer, which is in yourself, that's the end of the questions.

There's another question on this sheet of paper. How can you witness and feel your feelings at the same time? One could say you cannot really feel your feelings until you witness your feelings because until you witness, you observe, bring awareness to your feelings, you are your feelings.

So you don't feel them, you are them, you act them out. And most importantly, your feelings and your thought processes are linked. Feelings energize thought processes that reflect those particular feelings and the thought processes, the story.

Adds further energy to the feelings. And this is how certain feelings survive in the body long after an event has passed, which feelings that an animal would just pass through, whoosh, in humans, gets associated with a story that you can keep telling yourself and others. And so you can keep the feelings alive, the vicious circle.

So you're not really feeling your feelings. You are so immersed in them that you are the feelings. So it's called identification.

And so when you bring awareness, there is a place from where you can truly feel the feelings. And as you do that, the story is taken out because awareness replaces thinking. There's a shift then from being identified with a story in the head, the thought processes, to being the aware presence.

So you're no longer fueling the feelings with stories in the head. And now you can watch and feel them directly, whatever it may be. Feel it as an energy field in the body, but also be aware of yourself as that which looks, sees, feels, the field of attention.

In the same way that you look externally at a tree, you are aware of sense perceptions. Flowers, trees, you listen, bring awareness to sense perceptions. That is an enormous help in bringing awareness to your feelings.

The more awareness you bring to sense perceptions, the easier it is to bring awareness to what you feel inside, because it's simply a shift from externally directed awareness, ultimately nothing is external because the entire universe takes place inside you. But let's just put it like that. Externally directed awareness and inner directed awareness.

So you are present within and present without. So the enormous importance of being present without also as far as your inner life is concerned, because it's one awareness. If one could ask a similar question, how can I witness eating an apple?

See what the question was. And feel this, how you're eating the apple at the same time. It's only when you truly are present as you eat the apple that you can truly feel and taste the apple.

Before it's a process that is semi-conscious or even totally conscious. Eating goes back to a very long time. Ingesting substances.

This. And you can observe certain humans engaged in intelligent conversation at a dinner table. And the moment they put something in their mouth, they go completely unconscious.

They're totally, and they're not really tasting the food. They're just gobbling it down. And then when they've swallowed, they wake up for a moment again and then they talk about literature or philosophy.

But to really eat an apple consciously is a wonderful thing. Then you bring something that is usually unconscious, you make it conscious. Maybe that's called Tantra if you do it with sexuality, but it could be any activity that would usually be very unconscious that is an animal impulse in humans.

And you bring consciousness to it, witness it, observe it. It then has a different quality. It becomes beautiful.

And then you can truly taste the apple and be present. Wow. But there's always more than that which you witness.

There is the witnessing presence. Who is that? What is that?

That's you. Some people call it the I am. One person, an early 20th century spiritual teacher, Gurdjieff, whom some of you know, spoke of self-remembering.

And really what he meant was to remember who it is that is doing this or experiencing this or perceiving this, not the story-based entity, not thinking, okay, I'm John Smith and I'm eating an apple. That's not it. No, John Smith is eating an apple at this moment.

No, to sense that which knows, that which is aware, that in you that is aware that there is eating at this moment. So there's awareness of something and at the same time, self-awareness of the deepest sense of I. And so that is in any, whether you're eating an apple, watching a tree, engaged in some kind of action or activity, or watching an inner feeling.

There's always the manifested and the, one could say, the unmanifested. We called it sometimes the background and the foreground. In the foreground is what happens.

In the background is the field, the I am, the deepest I am, in which whatever happens is happening. Now it can happen that the background that what we call here the background or the ground, which we could call being, the ground of being, it can happen that that ground is so intensely felt, realized, that what is occurring, one could almost say, is a shift. And this is how a deeply awakened being experiences the world.

And that shift is what, as you are just awakening, what is foreground becomes the background. And that which you perceived as the background as you were awakening becomes so, it's realized in its vastness that that becomes the foreground. In other words, your sense of beingness, the spacious field of presence is so vast and all-fulfilling that whatever is happening is just a little, sometimes I call it a ripple on the surface of the ocean is the event.

And you feel your own being or being so strongly that that occupies the entire foreground. And any event is a background, a little background event. And so that is from that place, certain Indian teachers say the world is unreal.

It's absurd if we take that as a philosophical proposition and then start believing in it, it doesn't make sense. You can claim a hundred times that the world is unreal, but the next moment something happens and you react. So where's the unreality of the world?

If the world upsets you so much, it was only an idea in the head. But they talk from that place where to them, whatever happens is like a dreamlike structure. They can see how quickly it appears, how quickly it disappears.

Any event, anything is fleeting, of course it is. Right now you're here in another now on the same date, totally different surroundings. This has dissolved already, gone.

What hasn't dissolved is that which is aware. So some Indian teachers then from that place where the vastness of the sense of I am or beingness presence, the stillness could say is so vast, the I alive stillness, that that becomes the foreground and any events become the background. But for many of you, as this is beginning to emerge, it could be better described as you sense it already coming in, in the background.

And that's wonderful. It's more than most human beings on this planet now or in the past ever experienced. It's still, it's a wonderful thing.

And it's from that place of the background having become the foreground that Jesus could say, I have overcome the world. And it's from that place, perhaps also that Krishnamurti once in a talk, he was already quite old, said to his audience, do you want to know my secret? And they'd been coming for 30 years waiting for the secret.

And they all said, yes, please. Okay, here it is, he said, I don't mind what happens. I believe this question here has just been answered.

You speak of using the senses to alter presence. What about going deeper and going beyond the senses? If everyone around you is complaining and building their story, what do you do?

Say, is that so all day? Yes. Yes.

Yes. Comment on their complaining or spend less time with the unconscious people. Some days you would practice all day.

The last statement is partially true and not just some days. You will practice all day. Well, is that so is not necessary to say.

The story is the momentum of the egoic mind. It will try to draw you in in some way to make you part of the story. The story very often in people is energized even more by their pain body.

And the stories can be quite a violent story. So there's a story, but it's energized by enormous emotion, which is past emotion to a large extent, not necessarily generated by this little event that was the triggering event, but the emotion is far deeper. It's human pain that has lived in each human being for millennia and has built up.

It is inherited human pain. But that what we call pain body, this energy field, this residue of past emotion, of past emotional suffering that lives in humans tends to use the mind to renew itself, to feed on your thinking. And that becomes the story that is energized by human pain.

At other times, it may just be the mind pattern without the energizing effect of the pain body, but even that has a strong pulling power. Your greatest weapon, so to speak, is stillness as you listen to the story. And you will notice that's not a weapon that you can fight actively with, because the moment you fight the story in someone, you've become part of it.

Even if you say you're in a story, you're telling, the moment you start talking, that'll become a story. Your story will be that they have a story.

[Speaker 3] (9:05:31 - 9:05:34)

Lesson six, continued on disc eight.